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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

A THAI APPRECIATION OF VISUAL NARRATIVES

by

Kalyanee Vorapassu (C)

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

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IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

OF MASTER OF EDUCATION.

James Blakey
J. BLAKEY

D. SAWADA

J. JAGODZINSKI

Date: October 3, 1984

DEDICATION

To all who were my teachers,

Especially my parents, my first teachers,

and Dr. Saisuri Chutikul.

ABSTRACT

This study explores into the experience of young children creating visual narratives. It probes into the experience in order to grasp an understanding and an appreciation of a child's creation. A visual narrative is a way of telling a story through drawing. In this study, visual narratives have two forms. The first is a drawing that on its own tells a story. In other words, the drawing must offer enough information to the viewer to represent a specific story. The second form of visual narrative is a drawing accompanied by a story which the child tells or writes. This kind of visual narrative comes to life through the melding of drawing and storying.

This study is guided by the interpretive human inquiry which is different from the traditional empirical paradigm in that it is concerned with the process rather than the product. It does not attempt to prove a theory or fact, but rather it is a means of achieving an understanding of "how" and "why" the phenomenon occurs. In the interpretive inquiry, the researcher travels a re-searching journey of reflection thought/listening. In this process, the researcher delves deeper into the experience. What is gained from the experience is the essence, the philosophical base of the visual narrative. However, part of the interpretation of the data for this study is based on my cultural background. For example, the notions of bundal-jai (inspiration), and mythifying reality come from my Thai-ness.

What is it like for the children to experience visual narratives? What is the nature of a child's visual narratives? How does a visual narrative come to life in children's creating, rendering, and sharing of their own creations? What does the child's visual narratives disclose to us about the experience of being a child? How can we use the knowledge that we gain to help youngsters be creative, sensitive, and caring?

Visual narratives in this study came from the work of four children ages 6 through 8 years of age. The children's composition of visual narratives were created in the informal environment of my apartment, outside of the structured school environment. The

following themes emerged from this study: Bundal-Jai--Inspiration, Twi-Laksana--Duality of Vision, and Renderings. Bundal-Jai are the moments that evoke the creation of visual narratives. Twi-Laksana is the marriage of the visual and the narrative and illustrates the nature of visual narratives. Various "dual relationships," such as "telling-drawing" , "weaving-storying", "sequence-storying," and "creating visual haiku," express the essence of twi-laksana. Renderings is the "path" which leads the children to express their ideas and feelings about their "lifeworld." Experiencing time and space, asking in the telling, knowing by becoming, being in the moment, and mythifying reality address the textuality of the Renderings.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This study has required a long thought/listening process. In Thailand we would compare this process to the evolution of an orchid. A long period of development and growth must be endured before the blossom emerges . The radiant beauty and long life of the orchid blossom make it well worth the labour of cultivation. Another metaphor is brought to mind. Perhaps we can compare the studying-thinking processes with the two year gestation period of an elephant . Near the time of birth the pregnant elephant will choose another female elephant and they go off to a quiet place in the jungle. Immediately after birth the midwife elephant rolls the baby with her trunk to ensure that the baby elephant starts to breath. From this story we learn that our life depends on other people: we can not live alone. This world is the world of sharing and giving. With this in mind I would like to thank the many people involved in the "gestation period."

To Jan, my advisor, without whose help my the study would not reach fruition: your expertise in early childhood education and your patience and sensitive editing were greatly appreciated. Thank you for our valuable and insightful dialogue which helped me grasp the "meaning" of the experience of children's visual narratives. Your "metta" and "karuna" will never cease from my heart. Thank you for showing me the image of a good teacher. Your lovely flowers did indeed brighten and soften the atmosphere of the oral. And finally, thank you for encouraging to break away from the "norm " and view this study through my "Thai Lenses."

To (Dr.) Jan Jagodzinsky, for your insightful reading of the final draft, and thoughtful suggestions: thank you also for the direction and encouragement to use my "Thai-ness" in this study. Your profound knowledge of and insight into child arts were of great values to me.

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To Idrenne, who evoked me to prod and probe deeper, and "to return to the things themselves" in order to discover the inner treasure: thank you most of all for our treasured friendship.

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Finally, the most important of all, to the great visual narrative composers, Mizzy, Fadwa, Bader, and Ian. Thank you for the beautiful visual narratives, the fun times and the unforgettable moments, for showing me the beauty in "the ordinary-ness," and for enabling me to "re-live" my beautiful childhood.

ASYRAVATA: An Ode to My Teachers

Pajera...jariya...honti...kunutara...nusaskara....

As part of my tradition it is important for me to include these words as part of the study. It is the first line of the chant spoken on Wai Kru Day," the day we pay homage to our teachers. In Thailand, it is our tradition to recognize the importance of all our teachers, whether they be our school teachers, professors, music teachers, or even kick boxing. In Thai society, a teacher is highly respected. This solemn Wai Kru or paying homage to the teacher is performed each year. In the realm of Thai arts, every performance is preceded by the Wai Kru; however, it is kept short and simple.

The word "asyravata" means to praise and to honor. However, asyravata can also encompass the words or an action of giving praise and honor to our teacher. The first Thursday of the first school term is Wai Kru Day, when the students bring flowers, incense sticks, and a candle to honor their teachers. "Educational teachers" receive egg plant blossoms and a special kind of grass called Yaa Prag. Both symbolically represent Knowledge and Wisdom. The egg plant blossoms last a long time, representing the blossoming of knowledge which is also long lasting. Similarly, the Yaa Prag represents the spread of the newly gained knowledge. Various other symbolic items would be given symbolically to the other teachers. For example "Wai Kru Kaen" (this refers to a musical instrument mentioned on page 46) is the respect paid to the music teacher . A length of silk cloth, some cosmetics, a comb, and a mirror, comprise the special symbolic gifts. These objects are symbolically given to the teacher in recognition to the very first teacher and inventor of the instrument who was a woman.

I would now like to take this opportunity to "Wai Kru", to pay homage to my teachers.

Panya...Wuti...Karetete...Tinno...Wate...Nama...Mihung.

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Chapter I

An Invitation To The World Of Children

The Witch
Once upon a time there was witch (sic)
who lived in a haunted house.
She was cruel!
One night she went out to turn
children into frogs.
Then she turned into a dragon.
And there has a knight, the knight killed
the dragon (witch).
The end
(Ian, 8 years old)

One Saturday morning in November, I invited three children to my apartment for a drawing party. I had arranged the time and place with the parents and they all agreed that the children would be at my apartment around "tennish" in the morning. As soon as the car stopped, the children tumbled out and ran cheerfully to the door of my apartment. I greeted the children and invited them inside. After they sat down and were comfortable, I began to ask them about the Halloween party that they had attended that week. And thus I casually began the conversation:

Kalyanee: How was Halloween this year? Was it more exciting than last year?

Ian: Well, we did not go Trick-or-Treat this year. We had a party at our school instead.

Fay: We had a party at our school too. We didn't go Trick-or-Treat either.

Kalyanee: Why?

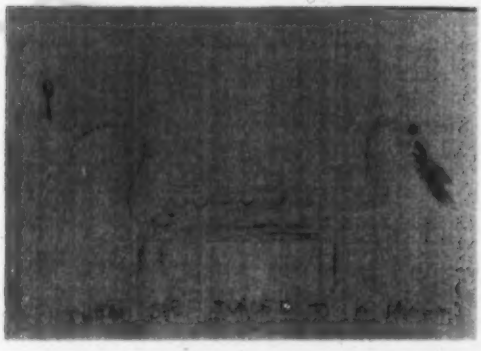
Mizzy: It is dangerous nowadays, you know. People give bad candies and cookies to children. . . .

The conversation about Halloween carried on for a long time with smiles and laughter. How wonderful the event was for these children! Then I showed the children some of the books that I had borrowed from the library. We read them and had

Plate I.1 "The Witch"

by

Ian



interesting discussions. After we had finished reading the books, I asked the children if they would like to do some drawing. Rubbing their hands, jumping up and down, they eagerly said, "Yes." Before they started drawing, I asked them, "Have you ever drawn a story drawing, a picture that tells a story? ' Ian told me he sometimes did. Judging from their facial expressions, I could see that the children did not quite understood what I had asked. Once again, I tried to explain by using the suggestion given by Wilson and Wilson (1979a), and thus I said:

> Have you ever drawn a story in one page to show what first happens in your story, what happens next, and how things finally turn out?

The children now seemed to have a better understanding of a story drawing. They selected the paper, crayons, and pastels from the big table at the corner and started to draw. I heard Ian say, "Oh! [intake of breath] I'm going to draw about a witch so I'm going to use this gray paper for my story." From that moment, I could hear interesting languaging of children engrossed in drawing: "I'll put a black cat and a bat up here. She is cruel, ha, ha. What's that Ian? Look, this is a broom. This is a haunted house." After a long talk to himself, and with others, Ian's story of The Witch began to emerge (Plate I.1).

Drawings such as The Witch are a particular kind of drawing, which Wilson and Wilson (1979b) term "story drawing," or "visual narrative." What is a visual narrative? Wilson and Wilson maintain that they are the kind of drawings which children compose in order to tell a story, to related an event, or to tell about an object. Children utilize these types of drawings to express ideas, notions, and experiences. They further explain that visual narratives are valuable in that children are able to express more clearly an episode which would otherwise have remain concealed in their heads. It appears that what Wilson and Wilson mean by a visual narrative is that it is the drawing itself that "tells" a story or "express" ideas and notions.

Let us pause for a while to take a look at the meaning of the term "visual narrative." The word "visual" holds these etymological meanings: "picture," "image," and "picture in

one's mind." The word narrative embraces these meanings: "story," "tale," "report," "chronicle," and "account." To me, the term "visual narrative" could mean two things. Firstly, it suggests a drawing that tells a story through the eyes, a story that emerges in one's mind from looking at the drawing. It must offer enough information to the eye if it is to represent a specific story successfully (Brilliant, 1984). Or it could mean a picture that is accompanied by a story which means that there is a picture and there a story with that picture. The last category seems to concur with Duncum's (1985) view that children's drawing is embedded in fantasy and frequently they draw with story in their mind. However, the term visual narrative encompasses both categories. The children who participate in this study compose drawings that tell a story and they also create drawings that are accompanied by a story. In a way, this is an interweaving between the two art forms: drawing and storying. Perhaps in creating a drawing in such a way the children have become as what Lewis (1981) calls painters and poets who collaborate.

The portrait of visual narratives in this study may appear to be different from the visual narratives in Wilson and Wilson's (1979b) observation because these visual narratives emerge from a different kinds of inspiration. For example play evokes visual narrative. We know that children's make-believe play is a storying. Thus the drawing enticed by play is a visual narrative. In other words, a visual narrative in this study goes beyond the art media. It goes beyond two dimensions. If the children had stopped at role play, it would not have been a visual narrative. It would have been a dramatic play.

Being there (in the moment) as children create these visual narratives, I describe a visual narrative for this study as a spontaneous picture that accommodates actions, movements, connectedness, and which are shared verbally. Thus the picture comes into life because there is a story behind it, there is a story to tell. However, I believe that this is not the only way of delineating children's visual narratives. Perhaps there might be other ways of describing it.

It appears to be that spontaneity is a vital part of visual narratives. What does it mean when I refer to a drawing spontaneous? Due to the time constraints, it is not possible for me to collect visual narratives that come about naturally. However, the visual narratives in this study come about because of an invitation. Thus they are spontaneous to the extent that they are in response to an invitation. When I say the word "invitation" I mean that there is an openness and freedom in children's creating and expressing. Each of the drawing session is like play. Each session is like a celebration.

However, a visual narrative or a picture story can be a way of telling a story through drawing. There is evidence that it has been presented in one form or another since Cro Magnon man first used the wall of his cave to depict bison hunts (Hoff, 1982). In the Thai culture, visual narrative seems to play a crucial role. The murals illustrated on the wall of the temples are often visual narratives. These visual narratives sometimes have religious purpose and are a form of teaching and learning. Ancient Egyptians painted on the walls to tell stories of how they lived, and we know that their hieroglyphic language uses pictorial symbols to represent words or sounds. Visual narratives have long been of great interest to many educators and art educators.

According to Lark-Horovitz, Lewis, and Luca (1973), a visual narrative produced by children is termed "picture story." They explain that children begin to tell stories in their drawings at an early age even before words are adequate and before pictures make sense. The child who is in the scribbling stage, for example, "may carry on a running commentary describing the action that otherwise would not be revealed visually" (p. 82). Lark-Horovitz et. al further explain that the content of the visual narratives can be a series of events evoked by children's real experiences, the events they have witnessed, their own spontaneous stories, or the stories they have been told. It is quite interesting that children's visual narrative or picture stories are usually produced in a combination of fact and fantasy. Young children, especially, tend to draw several episodes of the story in the same picture

rather than presenting the story in a sequential style. Drawings of this kind have been collected and are of interest to art educators in many parts of the world.

An early study by Luquet (1973) acknowledges the importance of the picture story. He was interested in child's drawing development and, based on his day-by-day observations of his daughter, depicts a number of her episodic pictures. She actually draws a picture to tell a story. Many young children tend to draw a picture with a story in it. Drawing is their primary means of expression.

Along a similar line, Gardner's (1980) observation and analyses of children's drawings also come from his own children. Gardner suggests that for children making pictures is a means of telling a story and of expressing interests and feelings. Jerry, his son, at one period became obsessed with the T. V. superheroes. He depicted the characters and scenes from the movie "Star Wars" over and over again. Gardner says that while Jerry's drawing are done to describe what happened or what something looks like, the drawings also fulfill another function. By producing the "Star Wars" archetypes of good and evil, the drawings become a means of "enacting and exemplifying all of the power, passion, fears and hopes that can populate the mind of a young child" (p. 113). Gardner further suggests that, "In my view, this interest in aggressive acts, this picture of the world as a perennial struggle between evil and beneficent forces, illuminates a central preoccupation of children at this point in their lives (p. 113). Gardner's daughter, Kay, depicts different things in her drawings. She seeks gentleness and contemplation. She is fascinated by the world of horses, and these animals become the inspiration for drawing. Kay frequently writes narrative to accompany her drawings. For both Jerry and Kay, drawing is a way of expressing their love and interests of things around them.

Although Graves' (1975) study, "An Examination of the Writing Processes of Seven Year Old Children," has its focus primarily on children's writing, his study reveals a remarkable insight into children's visual narratives. Graves' case studies reveal that when children begin to learn how to write, they see writing as speech. More importantly,

they dialogue and supply the context for the narrative while drawing. Michael, one of the children in the study, frequently draws before he starts writing. Graves describes one of the episodes as follows:

> Michael . . . apparently needed to draw before he was able to write in the composing phase. As he drew he would talk, often making appropriate sound effects to go along with the figure being drawn at the moment. While drawing the dinosaur. . . Michael made growling noises to stimulate the dinosaur presence. . . . As soon as Michael completed his drawing, he started to write about information contained in the picture (p. 231).

For children, drawing seems to be an important step for the prewriting period. They view drawing, verbal commentary, and writing as a form of unity .

Cocking and Copple's (1979) study examines the commentary which takes place when children draw in groups of three or four. A topic was provided for the children at each drawing session; however, it was stated that the researchers tried to avoid what might be termed a "singular" target (i.e. draw a bird) for the children to produce. Instead, the topics focused on the children's common experiences. During each drawing session, the childre commentaries were taped and coded by one of the two observers. The study reveals that young children not only enjoy drawing, but they like being in a group with peers nearby.

Perhaps Brent and Majorie Wilson are the two art educators who seriously put an effort into studying children's visual narratives. During the past ten years their voluminous work in art education has focused exclusively on children's spontaneous drawings.

Brent Wilson (1974) attempts to look at children's spontaneous drawings by analyzing one child drawings. He holds that spontaneous art produced by children is play. "It is certainly one of the most flexible, potentially complex, and involving of all types of play" (p. 4). He terms this type of spontaneous drawings as "play art." According to Wilson, it is unfortunate that this type of art has seldom been allowed in our highly structured art classes. However, he points out that:

> From play art we can learn that why young people make art in the first place and why some keep on making it while others stop. We may even begin to

> understand the complex process of art learning, which incidentally, takes place mainly outside of art classrooms (1974, p. 3).

In their collaborative work (1979b), Wilson and Wilson examine spontaneous drawings of different children, They have gained insights into the following questions: why children draw and why children draw a story? They explain that drawing a story is a part of the process of making personal symbolic models of the world. They also state that drawing serves as means of understanding.

> To understand himself or herself and his or her environment, the child makes drawings that serves as models for how things might be. Thus the drawings provide a means for constructing, testing, and prophesying what can be (p. 8).

Finally, they emphasizes that children's spontaneous art needs to be nurtured, treasured, and valued.

Wilson and Wilson's (1979a) further analysis of children's spontaneous drawings discloses another interesting aspect of this phenomenon. This time, they looked specifically at the kinds of themes revealed in children's visual narratives. They found that children in the United States, as well as in other countries, use several common themes in their visual narratives. These themes are: origins, growth, transformation, quest, trials, conflicts, survival, good and evil/crime and punishment, bonding, love or affection, creation, death, failure, freedom, success, natural processes of seasonal changes, and daily rhythms. However, Wilson and Wilson point out that some of these themes, perhaps all of them, contain mythical overtones. Further to this, they describe the function of visual narratives in this manner:

> Children's story drawings are tools with which they can anticipate their futures, ponder their origins, master life's processes and rhythms, come to know themselves, and decide how best to behave. Left to their own devices, some children use the tool superbly, others hardly know how to handle it at all (p.16).

When speaking about making visual narratives happen, Wilson and Wilson (1979c) say, "Teach them!" They explain that to a certain extent learning to draw is like learning to speak. Drawing as well as speaking contain essential components of vocabulary

and grammar. Perhaps the best way to teach children to create visual narratives is to begin with a series of play-like lessons. Wilson and Wilson write:

> What we suggest is to give children a series of play-like tasks that encourage, in a nonthreatening way, the expansion on the number of objects that can be drawn--the graphic vocabulary--and the ways in which objects may be depicted in various relationships--the graphic grammar (1979, p. 37).

Hoff(1982) probes into children's visual narratives by asking these questions: What are the reasons why young people become so fascinated with visual narrative? Does one of the most popular and enduring forms of the visual narrative seen in the mass media, the comic book, have impact? What influence does it have on the art creations of adolescent children? His main concern is the declining interest in producing spontaneous drawings in youngsters who leave the elementary grades and begin their junior high years.

Hoff answers these questions by citing the work of differents renowned researchers, art educators, and psychologists namely: Levenstien, Buhler and Hetzer, Wilson and Wilson, and Bettelheim.

Duncum (1985) points out that drawing is a means by which children use their imaginations and give expression to their fantasy worlds. His analyses of young girls' drawings of horses reveals that many drawing are accompanied with a story. These children do not merely make a drawing of a horse or horses, they draw with a story in their minds. Duncum emphasizes that fantasy is an important aspect of children's drawings. He writes, "The construction of meaning in children's drawing frequently remains as much in the child's mind as it is graphically expressed, we need to develop an appreciation for children's fantasy worlds and the ways these worlds both mirror and transform their lives" (p. 45).

Sampson (1987) investigated preadolescent's spontaneous drawings or visual narratives. The purpose of the study was to gain a better understanding of the preadolescent with an above average interest in drawing spontaneously. Eighteen children (15 boys and 3 girls) 9 to 11 years old were identified as having an above average interest

in spontaneous drawing. Participant observation in the classroom, intensive interview and case study were used as a means of collecting data. Sampson says:

> This study reinforced the importance of talking with children in doing research about children's drawings rather than analyzing drawings in isolation from the children who created them. The comment of one of the children, "you're just wondering what the kids feel about it," provides a message (or model) for both researchers and educators. For the interested classroom teachers, asking children how they feel about it, may evoke some surprising replies. When children say, "I feel like I'm in the picture" and "I feel that I'm free, that I can make anything I want," the satisfaction derived from spontaneous drawing is surely obvious. For the researcher, only by using qualitative research techniques can the real meanings of children's drawings be explored (p. 120).

Barrs (1988) has examined children's visual narratives as transitions between drawings and writing. Her observations and interviews with children disclose valuable information about childhood and drawing. She reports that young children may feel that writing is a form of drawing, which means that drawing is a form of language that they can communicate through this media. Drawing is a symbolic mode. In other words, drawing is an iconically based way of symbolizing and thinking about the world. Barrs emphasizes that drawing is a crucial part of learning how to write. She maintains that we need to acknowledge the potent contributions of visual narratives or drawing stories "which enable children to present, review and re-enact life" (p. 69).

Pitcher and Prelinger (1963) have examined stories created by children from two to five years of age. There were 137 children in the study, and they contributed 360 stories. The story sessions took place when the child was playing apart from the group (in the doll corner, playing with blocks or sitting and standing alone at interludes between play). To collect the stories, a researcher would ask, "Tell me a story. What could your story be?" The study reveals that there seems to be some confusion about creating a story. Older children, especially the five-year-olds, tend to tell a story that they have been told such as Sleeping Beauty or the Three Bears However, when they are reminded to tell a story of their own, it appears that their stories are filled with themes from fairy tales, information from books about space, or stories from television. After the stories had been collected,

they were grouped together according to the age of the child and themes were identified based on the contents of the story. The study revealed that the younger children's stories are very short sometimes they are about one or two sentences long. As children get older, the stories become more complex.

Applebee (1978) examined the child's concept of story and the developmental changes in the child's ideas and responses to literature. Applebee analyzed children stories by utilizing structured and semi-structured interviews, questionnaires, and an adaptation of Kelly's Repertory Grid Technique. The findings of the study reveal that the child's sense of story increases and changes with their maturity. Applebee further comments that:

> By about age of five, children confuse stories with books and think that they (stories) come from factories. Next, by about the age of eight or nine a child's construction of stories has undergone some subtle changes. From the child's own practice of a storyteller and writer of stories he is beginning to achieve insights into how other people do. He has internalized some parts of the creative process and to some extent he can now talk about stories as objects apart from then in children (p.13)

A study by Umiker-Sebeok (1979) attempted to analyze the structure of the spontaneous narratives produced within natural conversation by children from three to five years of age. The results of the study disclosed that the length, number, variety, and complexity of narrated events increases with age. The length of a story by the three year olds is not quite two sentences long, and is completed in a single turn at talk. The four year olds' length of story is not quite three clauses long and is completed in one and a half turns. The five year olds shows some of the changes which had taken place between three and four clauses long, but at a slower pace. The study indicates that "there is a considerable growth from three to five in the amount and sophistication of information furnished by preschool narrators, particularly between three and four years, as well as in the motivation of the stories with respect to the overall conversational discourse" (p. 91).

Pappas and Brown (1987) examined how young children learn story discourse by looking at three young children's repeated "pretend readings" with the intention of finding out how the prereading children develop an understanding of story discourse. The

findings revealed that children varied in their "understanding of two global story elements (placement and initiating event) and that their understanding generally improved with each successive 'reading' of the story" (p. 455). They emphasize that story discourse is not learned through the use of worksheets, flash cards, or many of the basal readers; rather young children can learn the communicative role of the story genre only if they hear and read good stories.

Thus it appears that studies investigating children's drawings and storying have been approached with different concerns. We see mainly studies aimed at the developmental aspects focused on in a narrative or storying as a form of discourse. Most of the studies over look the nature of drawing and storying coming together.

In contrast, this study is an appreciation of a deeper "aliveness" of a child's creation as a marriage and interrelation of the two art forms: drawing and storying. This study attempts to look at the sheer joy of telling. We tend to hurry our youngsters to move into writing their stories. Frequently when a child finishes drawing, the teacher asks the youngster about the drawing and then records the story and asks the child to copy it. We tend to forget that a little hand gets tired rather easily. Especially in kindergarten teachers are inclined to push children too quickly into the academic world. We tend to forget that childhood is the time of joy, wonderment, spontaneity, imagination, and intense feelings.

This study explores the child's experience of creating visual narratives not in an empirical way, but as a composing process in the melding between drawing and telling. I attempt to look at how the creation of visual narrative comes into being. What does a child's experience of visual narrative tell us about childhood? What does it have to do with teaching? For its methodological base, this study is guided by the interpretive human inquiry. Insightful thoughts come from various philosophers and authors, for example, Georges Gusdorf, Laurie Spurling, Richard Palmer, Rabindranath Tagore, Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh, J. Krishnamurti, Ronald Silvers, and Disetz Suzuki. But most important of all

my insightful thought arise from my Thai-ness, my cultural lens, which holds every part of this study together.

The Nature Of The Study

This study is guided by the process of the interpretive human inquiry. According to Darroch and Silvers (1982), an interpretive study is a reflective study. They explain that this type of research is like "a departure, a direction for exploration, not a destination" (p. vii). It is descriptive in nature, and is concerned with process rather than with outcomes or products. Its focus in on the meaning of an experience. An interpretive human study does not attempt to prove a theory or fact, rather it is a means of achieving an understanding of how and why the phenomenon being studied occurs. In other words:

> The knowledge of the inquiry in the interpretive human studies is nonrepresentative, nonaccumulative, not dependent on "realism" in the traditional empirical sense, and it must allow for the researcher's interpretation or meaning through the researchers reflective thought (Darroch and Silvers, 1982, p. 5).

Unlike the empirical mode of thinking which mainly operates in linear form and is based on numbers and other symbols, the interpretive inquiry calls for a kind of thinking manifested in sensory images (Flanerry, 1980). Flanerry explains the meaning of images as thus:

> Images are the content of the imagination. Images are tangible: they are color, texture, smoke, smells, fire, motion, orange, and they are fear, nervousness, frogs in the throat, and butterflies in the stomach. Images are feelings in all their shades, tones, and moods (p. 27).

In the interpretive study, the researcher comes to understand the phenomenon under investigation by way of prodding and probing deeper; the researcher undergoes a process of critical and reflective investigation. Darroch and Silvers (1982) further explain the nature of the interpretive inquiries does not provide the ultimate "how-to" guide. They claim:

> For interpretive human studies is not a system to be led down, a series of techniques to be specified, or even a collection of closed definitions. It is,

> in a simplistic sense, a way of bringing individual researchers more fully into the service of their research in a tension such that what is of the individual is disciplined by the analytical and synthetic necessities of what can be shown as knowledge (p. vii).

In the interpretive inquiry, we look at the phenomenon in a reflective way. We consider it thoughtfully from every angle so that we have a better understanding of the phenomenon. In a sense, an interpretive study is a study of knowing, an appreciation the nature or the suchness of things.

An interpretive study tries to look at the "experience" so what we get from the experience is what we call the "essence." Interpretive studies give us a philosophical base, but they do not mean something that is detached from the practical. In order to have philosophical base, we have to let it come from the practical. In the realm of an interpretive study, if we want to know about the children, where do we go? We do not go to the psychologist nor to the text about children, we go to the children. Thus we focus on the child. When we would like to know about the essence of children's visual narratives, we then ask, What is it like for a child to experience visual narratives? What is the nature of child's visual narrative?

Darroch and Silvers (1982) choose to use the melding of "biography" and "discourse" to denote interpretive inquiry. They maintain that the term "biography" (of the researcher) should not be referred to as the researcher's "autobiography." Rather it is the researcher's biography as a cultural memory. They say, "For understanding, biography within interpretive inquiry refers to a cultural returning to what we hold with others as part of the collective form that we share with others" (p. 17). In a sense, the term "biography" refers to those "things" which I, as the researcher, bring to the study such as grounds of experiences, interests, culture, world view, and expertise. "Biography," thus, is exactly what you are at a specific moment in time.

Perhaps, my role in this study is that of a pedagogue and a friend who leads and guides the children. I bring a background of experience to the research phenomenon, provide the materials for the drawing sessions, and read the proper kinds of stories to the

children. More importantly, in some way, I am the children's friend because I am an adult who is interested in their drawings, and it is the sincerity of my interest that gives motive and meaning to the entire endeavor.

The term "discourse" in interpretive human studies is specifically a discourse for communicative relationship. "Such a discourse as an expression of an interpretation of interpretive domains contains a tension between and a reflection of the experience within interpretive inquiry" (Darroch and Silvers, 1982, p. 14). They continue:

> Thus, what we seek in discourse is an achieving of a communicative relationship between ourselves as researchers and those we study. Within our immediate world of circumstance we attempt to transform through reflective understanding and existential knowledge what it is that we first fail to understand and grasp in lives of others. For this new understanding we try to achieve a relationship of reciprocity in providing not only for our own presence but for a welcoming of the presence of those who are studied (p. 14-15).

Silvers (1982), in his study of the understanding of children's discourse, reveals a remarkable way of the melding of biography and discourse. He uses the process of reflective thought or what he terms "reflective discourse" as an approach to understand children's discourse. Within the reflective discourse, Silvers proposes three voices for the interpretations of the experience. These voices as: uncovering, discovering, and reforming.

The first voice is an "uncovering" of the movements of understanding within the phenomenon. This "first voice is that of sense-making commonly applied to daily lives as we account for what those events contain and what they mean" (Silvers, 1982, p. 175). Silvers explains that he uses an ordinary practice to provide what he encounters as he engages video recordings of interviews of children; as such, the first voice appears to be a narrative of the tapes and a constituting of their meaning.

A second voice is movement toward "re-interpretation" and "recovery." Silvers expounds that the first and second voice are closely linked, since the second voice emerges in order to "discover" the meaning within the first. Silvers further states that, "The second

articulation recovers the interpretation of the first voice, and in doing so, this second voice may itself subsequently be attended to for its own tacit meanings, as those implicit understandings effaced in pre-reflective consciousness" (p. 176).

Within the intertwining process, the first and second voice help clear the way for a third voice. This voice is capable of realizing the potential of dialogical meaning in an interpretation of the phenomenon.

> Thus, the third voice looks not to the speaker's motives or to what the speaker may be thinking as referents for the meaning of the speaker's discourse. The third voice examines the surface tension of the words in a context of equal parties in dialogue; the third voice speaks of what is carried dialogically among partners in conversation (Silvers, 1982, p. 176).

In a way, what Silvers attempts to express is that the first voice, "uncovering," and second voice, "discovering," are directed to the study of our culture, "while the third voice is an attempt to reform and extend our culture in its relationship to other cultures" (Silvers, 1982, p. 176).

To consider the child's story drawings then is not only to look at the story drawings themselves. Essentially an integration of these drawings involves a consideration of the child. When one looks at a visual narrative by the child, one inevitably sees the child. A study of visual narratives consequently is a study in childhood.

Perhaps in a grown-up world we do not take children seriously. Perhaps they are indeed utilizing their stories and their drawings as a means of recommending themselves to us-- thus we have to listen to what children have to say. Children, at the kindergarten level particularly, have not yet developed their writing skills and therefore the story drawings becomes a more viable form of expression by the child. What does it mean, for example, to describe a child as a tabular rasa, a lump of clay, and empty vessel, or the growing plant? No one seriously uses these metaphors anymore, but there is a kind of residue in the minds of many adults who still talk of children as if they were not yet human beings and will become only when filled with or shaped by preconceived notions of the world (Vandergrift, 1980).

This chapter is like an openness or a beginning or an invitation. In the Thai language, the word "cheon" (pronounced as in the word "churn") means to invite. This word is a beautiful word because it also gives other meanings such as "to join in," "to fill in," and "to come in." When a guest enters the door step of the house, we say "cheon," as to mean "please come in," or "to enter." This word deeply reflects that it is a pleasure to have you as my guest. A sentence, "Khaw cheon tang nee," in Thai literally means "I humbly ask or beg you to come this way." Thus this chapter is a starting point, an invitation to a celebration. An invitation to come and see the beauty of children's worlds, the fascinating worlds of visual narratives which I deeply value as an important part of childhood.

The Fabric Of Thai-ness

As the title suggests, the essence of Thai society is a "weaving," using the threads of nature, culture or traditions, and the Buddhist path of life. The thread of nature is the basis of our society. Our country is blessed with a benevolent climate, produces a bounty of fruits and vegetables, and has a variety of fish and game close at hand. Thus nature provides a seed bed for the Thai culture to grow and flourish. Because it is not "technically difficult" to obtain or maintain this stable food supply, the society evolved along the branches of the "arts" and the pursuit of beauty and perfection. Delving deeper into the relationship of nature and culture, we find that there is no separation of the two. Thai traditions are based on harmony with, and the close observation of, Nature. This is reflected in the many holidays and festivals that celebrate or coincide with the different growing seasons, rivers, or the coming monsoon rains.

Intricately woven with the thread of "Nature" is the the strong but subtle thread of the Buddhist philosophy or "The Path of Life." For more than a thousand years this "thread" has instilled the ideals of "Love, Harmony, and Balance" in our everyday living. This has resulted in a culture that lives nonviolence and uses, but does not abuses, the

Nature that we depend upon. In the Thai language we use the word "Dharma" or "Dharma-chati" which is derived from Sanskrit to mean Nature. Buddhas (1981) speaks of the meaning Dharma in this way:

> The Dharma is nature itself; the Dharma is the law of nature; the Dharma is man's duty in accordance with the law of nature; and the Dharma is the result which accrues to man because of his acting in accordance with that duty (p. 67).

This combination or "weaving" has given our people a very real sense of Freedom and Optimism in terms of our cultural outlook. The expression "mai pen rai" meaning "It doesn't matter" or "not too worry," portrays our outlook and can be felt by visitors to my country. Our culture has not been greatly influenced by any other dominating culture (Thailand has never been colonized). By choosing ideas and ideals freely from other cultures (in other words, "adapting" rather than "adopting"), our society has been able to develop and evolve into a highly sophisticated culture. The result as a whole seems to by the "ideal society." One that is able to survive and grow without aggression and /or oppression, yet strong enough to resist the aggression of others. Even today one can break the "thin veneer of the western technological invasion," which is gripping Bangkok simply by going to any of the smaller villages in the country side.

Within the setting of this "idealized society" there is a very important "place and space" for children. Children have lots of time just to be children, to play, to sing aloud, to be free, to be individuals, not to be squeezed into the adult space whenever it is convenient, and at the same time they are greatly influenced and gently molded within the context of the extended family. This ensures the survive of the cultural traditions--the Thai-ness.

This fabric of Thai-ness will be woven through the study. As I am Thai, I cannot interpret children's work in a western view. Therefore I am imposing my view of Nature, Beauty, Freedom, Love, Truth, and Harmony upon the study. In a sense, this view is my bias and may be different from the western perspective. As a researcher, I cannot lay aside my bias just as a Canadian would bring his or her culture to the study. In spite of this bias

and cultural difference, I believe the underlying power of visual narratives will be meaningful for both western and eastern cultures.

The Body Of The Study

The study is comprised of six chapters. The themes which emerged became the main chapters of the study.

Chapter Two presents the methodological base and research approach in this inquiry. It describes the following: the fusion of horizons; entering the Thai heart (this expression borrowed from a book by Consensus about Thailand of the same title); a path of attaining knowledge which covers the structure of evoking-inviting, prodding-inquiring, probing-investigating, and prompting-imagining; and the portraits of visual narratives composers (the four children who participate in this study).

Chapter Three, Bundal-Jai: Inspiration ponders vital elements that inspire children to create visual narratives. How does a story drawing come into life? What is the nature of the inspiration that prompts a child into the aesthetic imagination?

Chapter Four, Twi-Laksana: Duality of Vision describes the characteristics of visual narratives: the duality of vision which is the interweaving between drawing and storying. This chapter also explores various portraits of visual narratives created by children. They are telling-drawing, weaving-storying, sequencing-storying, and creating haiku.

Chapter Five, Renderings has things to say about how children express themselves in the imaginative way. This chapter highlights the themes of mythifying reality, knowing by becoming (this expression is borrowed from the name of an article by Myra Barrs), being in the moment, asking in the telling, and experiencing time and space.

Chapter Six, Appreciation, reflects an appreciation of visual narratives and the Thai culture. This chapter presents the conclusion of the study.

Chapter II

COMING TO KNOW ABOUT VISUAL NARRATIVES

This research arises from my personal interest in children's creation of visual narratives or story drawings. In the study, I attempt to reveal the nature of children's experiences of making-up story drawings which are an interweaving between drawing and storying. Four children age 6 and 8 are the visual narrative composers. Their composition have been created during out-of-school times in informal environments.

In this chapter, I wish to pursue my thinking in the following areas: the fusion of horizons, entering the Thai heart, the path of attaining knowledge, and portraits of visual narratives composers.

Fusion of the Horizons

> The human horizon, the cultural horizon, and the personal horizon, fitted the one into the other, constitute the field of comprehension as the common moment of the two histories that meet. The landscape of communication, then, is not given once and for all in a massive simplicity. It is itself made up of a series of successive backgrounds against which the present reality of the conversation stands out. Action reacts against backdrop and recreates it; the reciprocity of the beings present to one another is projected as a new environment expressing the state of relations at each moment of their history (Gusdorf, 1986, p. 63).

Gusdorf's notion of "fusion of horizons" may enable us to understand how we makes sense of our world in an authentic way. In doing an interpretive inquiry, researchers bring with them human, personal, and cultural horizons. According to Gusdorf, communication emanates within the fusion of these three horizons.

The human horizon deals with values and universal emotions such as love, greed, hatred, and anger. From the Thai way of life which is strongly influence by Buddhism, the ultimate goal of life is to reach niravana or enlightenment. To reach the niravana, one must move beyond the duality of vision: hate-love, winning-losing, like-dislike, and many others. And if one truly lives free from the judgement of the pair of the opposite, one sees the world as the way it is. This is the state of equanimity.

The personal horizon refers to the personality, the feelings of the researcher: serious, slow, bossy, imaginative, creative, and caring. In the personal horizon we are essentially dealing with individual differences. This horizon is a reflection of an individual's perception and understanding of the world. In other words, we each take our personal disposition and past experiences into the world of research. We have a personal horizon fused with our being. Gusdorf states:

> Our behavior and moods give meaning, at any given moment, to the environment of beings and things. That which is called the personality of a man or of a woman is reflected in the decor of his life, a decor which is the sedimentation of his behavior, the inscription of an existence on the world (p. 71, 1986).

The cultural horizon includes the sub-culture of the researcher such as Irish, German, Chinese, Malaysian, and many others. In this inquiry my cultural horizon is Thai-ness. As it is stated by Greene (1977) that, "Our seeing is affected by our culture, our experiences, and certainly by what we have learned (p. 18)." Thus it is important to include my Thai-ness because this study took place in a culture which is very different from my own. Although I have been living in North America for many years, in some way I am still a Thai. Since I was born and raised in Thailand, my world view is inevitably different from that of North Americans. In a way, this study is like a sight seeing journey into children's visual narratives through Thai lenses.

Entering the Thai Heart

Let me now take you to a far, far away land. Sometimes it is called the Land of Smiles. People in this land are very proud of themselves for their homeland is the one and only country in Southeast Asia that has never been colonized by any European country. This is their great pride. This land is called Siam or Thailand. The word "Siam" is derived from the root word "Saya," or "Sawaya," which in Sanskrit means freedom. The word "Thai" is a Thai word meaning "free;" thus Thailand means the land of freedom. Siam or

Thailand is a land richly bound with cultures and arts that have developed over many centuries.

It is believed that the best way to learn the culture of a country is through its literature. This is because literature expresses the values, attitudes, beliefs, and various aspects of life. The following symbolic story, which is a reading text for elementary school in Thailand, may illustrate some aspects of the subtle shades of the Thai-ness. The story of The Golden Conch is as follow:

> Once upon a time there was a wise and handsome king. His name was Sung-Tong which literally means "a golden conch." His wife, Rojana, was kind and beautiful. He was called "Sung-Tong' because he was born in a conch, and his body was gold.
>
> One evening, while he was having dinner, he noticed that one of the dishes was elaborately decorated. He stopped eating and took a careful look. There were pieces of squash exquisitely carved to tell a story. He was totally captured, since each piece told the story of his life.
>
> Juntra-Devi, his mother, was once a queen, and she was forced to leave the palace because her new born baby was a conch, not a human being. She had to leave because of the jealousy of the second wife; who knew from the astrologer that a powerful person had been born. She bribed the astrologer, and forced him to tell the king that the baby had brought disaster to the kingdom. When Juntra-Devi fled, she took her baby with her and went to live with an old couple in a little hut near the rice field outside the city.
>
> Then Sung-Tong began to recall the day on which his mother had broken the conch. He had been living inside the conch for many years, and he was now growing up. He felt sorry that his mother had to work hard in the rice field, so he decided to come out and help her. A week passed by and Juntra-Devi was indeed puzzled with the prepared dinners and the completed house chores. She wanted to find out who did all this work. That morning she left the house pretending that she was going to go the rice field, but after she reached the half way mark, she came back to the house, and hid behind the tree. With great surprise she saw a boy stepping out of the shell, she rushed to the shell and broke it with a piece of wood.
>
> Their happy days did not last very long because the king's wicked wife heard the story and ordered that Sung-Tong must be executed. He was bound and dropped into the ocean. Fortunately, the Demon of the ocean, who was ugly but kind, saved him and brought him up like her own son. She loved him dearly and taught him "Montras," the magic words for elevating, fishing, and hunting. The day he left the Demon was indeed sad. He went to the room on the top floor where he was always forbidden to enter. He had long known what was inside it, since he had entered it once while the Demon was away hunting. He unlocked the door and went to the silver pool and bathed in it, and his body turned silver. Then he bathed in the other pool which was gold, and his body turned gold and beautiful. He covered himself with armor and an ugly mask. Meanwhile, the Demon was returning from hunting. She was to see him leave. She asked Sung-Tong

to stay; however, he refused and left. The Demon was so sad that she died of a broken heart.

Soon he arrived in the country of which he eventually became king. How different it was on that day! He was just a silly and ugly looking man. The king, who was getting old, wanted his seven daughters to get married, so he arranged a party, and princes were invited from far and wide. Finally, the six sisters each found a prince she loved. However, Rojana did not like any one of them. The king sent for more single men, but Rojana still could not find any man she liked. Sung-Tong was the only man left in the country. At this point, the king was getting annoyed so he told the soldier to take Sung-Tong inside the palace. When Sung-Tong saw her beautiful face, he fell in love with Rojana, and began to pray that she would see his hidden beauty. His wish came true; Rojana saw his beauty and so she tossed a garland of flowers to him meaning that she decided to marry him. The king was very disappointed with his daughter, and the couple were driven to live in a cottage outside the city. Finally, when the king learned that Sun-Tong was a wise man, he later was crowned and became king.

After a deep pondering of his life, he sent for the cook. It was great joy for him to see that the cook who prepared the beautiful dish was his mother. There was a great joy because of the reunion of mother and son, and the whole kingdom celebrated for seven days and seven nights (Part of the Thai oral tradition).

In the beginning of the story, the king was captured by the beauty of a work of art, the carved squash. This shows that art is important in the Thai culture. Flowers and incense sticks are beautifully arranged for the religious ceremonies and festivals. In the area of cooking, attention is paid to flavors, taste, and the artistic arrangement of ingredients. Fruits and vegetables are often exquisitely carved into flowers and leaves. Art is, in fact, everywhere, from birth to the end of the Thais' life.

I have chosen to begin this section with a story because storytelling is a part of the Thai culture. In the past, story was used as a means of educating people, and for fostering moral development in children. This story, The Prince Of The Golden Conch, is similar to a fairy tale. "Like all great art, fairy tales both delight and instruct; their genius in that they do so in terms which speak directly to children" (Bettelhiem, 1977). The Thai people believe that fairy tales have a deep connection to human beings. Human feelings such as love, hope, joy, longing, grief, bitterness, and so forth are expressed in fairy tales. Further, the Thais strongly believe that "goodness exists and these forces will eventually prevail against destructiveness" (Winner, 1982, p. 296).

Let us now go back to the story of Sung-Tong. It may seem absurd to the modern logical mind to hear that a woman gives birth to a conch. However, telling a story in such manner is perhaps a way to capture the listeners' attention. It makes one stop and think. Why? Right away questions begin to arise. In Thailand, as well as in India, the conch has many high prestigious uses, and it is the symbol of wisdom, wealth, and prosperity. A conch is blown during the royal ceremonies. In a Thai wedding a conch is used to pour holy water on the bride and groom's hands. It is interesting that in the Bahamas a conch is also recognized as a symbol of prosperity for fishermen. When a fisherman has a good catch, he will blow a conch while approaching the shore.

Like all fairy tales, Thai fairy tales are fond of gold and silver. Sung-Tong had a bath in the silver pool and his body became silver, and then he bathed in the next pool which was gold, and his body turned gold. This speaks to me, I believe, of the different stages of development in a human life. It shows that life is an ever changing process. When Sung-Tong's body turns gold, he is a full grown man, ready to go out to live in the wide world. The story reveals that education is honored in the Thai culture and is an important part of Sung-Tong's development into manhood. Sung-Tong learns the magic words for elevating, fishing, and hunting from the Demon. These in fact could be the survival arts. This shows that education has always been an important aspect of the Thai life. Did Sung-Tong really have a golden body and cover it by wearing armor? Perhaps he was an ugly man. But in a metaphoric sense, I believe the story attempts to portray that the true quality of a person is wisdom, talent, and knowledge not the beauty.

The story of The Golden Conch also reflects the role and the status of women in the Thai society. The princesses were allowed to choose a man with whom they wanted to share their life. The marriage was not arranged. Although in the past there might be a case of an arranged marriage; it is not seriously practiced in Thailand. This story, in a way, reflects the women's rights in the Thai society. Superficially, it seems to be that Thai women are inferior to men, but is it true?

Quite often they may compare a man to the front legs of an elephant and a woman to its hind legs, but the truth is that an elephant walks with its hind legs. If we reflect upon the Thai society in the ancient time, Thai women fought courageously side by side with the men in the battle field. It was recorded that a great queen named Sri Suriyothai sacrificed her life to save her husband during the hand-to-hand combat on elephants' backs. Seeing that her husband's elephant was about to be defeated, she intervened by driving her elephant between her husband's and the Burmese king's elephant. Not knowing that she was a woman who was dressed up like a man to fight in the battle, the king of Burma killed her.

In Thailand women hold a high position in the society. Some of them own and run a company. When I first came to Canada my friends were very surprised when I told them that for years and years we had had a woman as a principal running a school or as a dean in charge of a faculty. Not to mention a female president, or a rector at Thammasartra University in Bangkok. If we say language is cultural bound, then let us look at some words in the Thai language. We call a river "mae-nam" which literally means "mother of the water." When the Thai men go to fight in a war, although it is a man who leads the army, in Thai he is called "mae-tup" which means "the mother of the army." A jack which is used for hoisting up a car is called "mae-rang" and etymologically it means "the mother of strength." We speak of a magnet as "mae-lek" meaning "the mother of the iron." All of these words indeed reveal that women are recognized as important. There is a saying in Thailand that for a young child to live without a mother, life is lost and full of despair; the child's life is like travelling on a broken raft. Women are the mother of the world and it is partly their hidden force that keeps the Thai society moving.

Let us now look at other aspects of Thai-ness. According to the Thai world view, things are inseparably linked and interrelated. Thus nature, life, and art are viewed as one, not as separate entities. Life is like some nebulous system, connected and interdependent. All things exist as an integrated whole of unbroken continuity. Therefore, art is not seen as

an object, and the true principle of Thai art is the principle of continuity. In the realm of Thai classical dance, for example, the dancer transforms words into movements. The meaningful, rhythmic hand movements correspond with the poetic words of the song. To give a better illustration of how things intertwine in the Thai culture, I wish to use the activities on Songkran Day as an example.

Songkran, or the Water Festival, takes place every year on the thirteenth day of April. In the past, before changing to follow the western calendar, Songkran was the New Year's Day of Thailand. On the morning of this day the Thai people make merit by offering alms to the monks and to the poor. Then it is the tradition to set free the captured animals such as birds and fish. In late afternoon, a giant drum is sounded to signify that all the Buddha images will be taken out for people to water. This is followed by giving a shower to the monks, (in most areas giving a shower is done by pouring water on the monk's hands), in turn the monks give them blessings. Then the Thais go to their parents home to pay respect to their elders asking for forgiveness for the wrong doings in the passing year, and to give them a shower and gifts. And finally, the fun time for the younger people, the water fight or throwing water at each other. On this day, people of all age cheer, dance, and celebrate.

Like their vibrant colored silk, the Thais weave wonderfully diversed aspects of life together. All of the activities on Songkran Day reflect the intertwining of various aspects of life in an integrated wholeness. There is a religious activity. In the morning, the Thais go to the temple to offer food to the monks. At the altar flowers, candles, and incense sticks are exquisitely arranged in front of the main Buddha image. Songkran, in a way, is a cleansing festival. Pouring water on the Buddha images is not only an annual cleaning, but symbolically it is also to cleanse the mind. Then there is the giving and sharing, especially to the poor. This is a social welfare. Setting free the birds and fish, in a subtle way, speaks to us of the conservation of wild life. Thus there will always be birds in the sky and plenty of fish in the rivers. There is a family reunion and then, after all

the solemn parts have been fulfilled, comes the fun time or "sanuk" as the water fight begins! In the villages, Songkran can be the beginning of a relationship. On this day, a young man can get to know the girl who is of interest to him. Gently, he pours the cold water on her delicate shoulder and gives her wishes in the year to come. In the same manner, gently the girl does the same thing. There is love and caring even in the hottest month of the year. Isn't that beautiful?

To enter the Thai heart, one needs to understand Buddhism which is the root of our arts, our culture, and our education. And since the majority of people practice Buddhism, the Thai culture is specifically Buddhist. "Buddhism suggests a way of looking of life, which influences everything a Thai does every moment of every day" (Forman, 1966, p. 52).

Thai education, like the education in Europe during the medieval period, originated in the monasteries. The philosophy of education then was quite different. Education was not superficially to train a person to be intelligent, but to be a complete person. Thus education did not over look people in their wholeness. The spiritual aspect was considered to be a vital part of life. Although it is not seriously practiced like in the past, there is a Thai tradition that a young man will enter a monkhood to study Buddhism. This is because he will later on become a father or the head of the family and have many responsibilities. Thus a man needs to be spiritually and physically strong.

To study Buddhism is one of a true ways to understand life, since Buddhism came into life because of these existential questions: What is the meaning of life? Why are we born? How can we escape the unpleasantness of the pain of birth, old-age, sickness, and death? And in between how can we cease the hatred, treachery, ill-will, worry, suspicion, anger, malice, fear, grief, distress, sorrow, despair that perpetually bother us (Buasri,1980). Education is a process that will ultimately free us from the overpowering environment and help us to efficiently adjust our life and to become a better being who lives

a good life: the ultimate "summum bonum" (Rajavoramuni, 1982). Thus we can proudly say that our ancestors had a profound way and a deeper sense in life.

Klausner (1987), an American anthropologist, in his a study about the life of people in Thailand maintains that Buddhism plays a vital role in the Thai way of living. After many years of living in Thailand, he helped his "farang" (Westerner) friend who wished to have an opening ceremony of his jewelry shop in a Thai style. He describes that experience with these words:

> We thought about that gala, somewhat *avant garde*, occasion when a *farang* business man asked us to help him arrange the opening ceremony of his new jewelry store on Silom Road. Our first approach was, not to the caterers, but to a monk at whose *Wat* we regularly made merit. He asked when the store would be ready to open, consulted a rather dusty tome and announced that the most auspicious time would be 9: 47 on the following Tuesday morning. We said we would be most grateful if he could arrange to bring all the necessary items except for the Buddha image which we would bring from our home. We invited nine monks, as nine is a lucky and auspicious number. The words nine and progress are closely related through similarity in sound though the spelling is different. This is another reason to choose nine as an auspicious number to assure progress of the undertaking involved.
>
> The store was opened with all the attendant pomp and ceremony. The monks arrived; chants of victory and progress wafted through the store; sacred symbols were etched over the doors; and holy water sprinkled throughout the premises and on the owners and others attending the ceremony. A sacred thread had been stretched about the boundaries of the store enclosing and concentrating the sacred chants. Luncheon was served to the monks at 11: 00 o'clock, and, after we presented small offerings, they depart shortly after noon. The *farang* owners seemed to breath a sigh of relief that they had successfully fulfilled the necessary cultural and religious requirements. Now, finally, the champagne could be opened (pp. 269-270)!

Although some of the rituals here, such as etching a sacred symbol on the door and sprinkling holy water, are the Bramanistic rituals that amalgamated in the Thai culture, this story illustrates that Thais incorporate religion into many aspects of their lives, and that Buddhism affects the Thai way of thinking at all times. Although many people claim that Buddhism is a philosophy and not a religion, this does not seem to be a problem for the Thai people. Happily, they continue living Buddhism. What does Buddha teach?

The following story serves as an introduction into Buddha's teaching, an illustration of how his teaching is woven into the fabric of the Thai life, and perhaps what is it like in a Thai way to live Buddhism? This story took place in Kanchanaburi a province in Thailand near the Burmese border, during the World War II. Although this story is not important enough to record in the world history, I believe, it is engraved in many hearts.

> Towards the end of the World War II, the Japanese army invaded Asia including Thailand. Then the next target was Burma, which was a colony of the British Empire at that time. Thus many Allied prisoners were sent in from Singapore to build the railroad and bridge across the River Kwae. These prisoners embraced many men from many countries such as England, Holland, and New Zealand. The railway labor force cost the life of many prisoners. Thousands and thousands of them died because of the heat that caused dehydration, and not to mention hunger, fatigue, and malaria. This brought sorrow to the Thai villagers who lived in the area to see the death of these prisoners. In secret they gave them food and water. The Japanese soldiers indeed were in the utmost fury, and could not understand the Thais to give food to the enemy (Part of the Thai oral tradition).

What is happening here? Are these villagers betraying the Thai government that surrendered to the Japanese and agreed to fight the Allies? Does this the motto, "Asia for Asians" have any meanings to these villagers at all? Can you call someone who has never brought harm into your life an enemy? But really, did these villagers understand the war that was going on? What could be an explanation to this incident?

Since these people deeply believe in Buddhism, helping a person who is suffering is a natural part of their being whether that person is a Japanese or an Allied prisoner of war. What they had done was to live according to what the Buddha preached for thousands of years, mores specifically, they had followed the concepts of the Sublime States of metta and karuna: "extending unlimited universal love and good-will (metta) to all living beings without any kind of discrimination, 'just as a mother loves her only child;'. . .compassion (karuna) for all living beings who are suffering, in trouble and affliction" (Rahula, 1974, p. 75). Is it wrong then to help someone who is in trouble? And so who is right and who is wrong and to be condemned?

It is said that the Buddha's teaching includes 84,000 principles; however, each of them leads to "ahimsa" or nonviolence. Buddha says: "Hatred does not cease by hatred, hatred ceases only by love" (Thien-An, 1975, p. 145). In other words, only love evokes love. Buddha teaches his followers to live in moderation not in the extremes, and this moderate path may not be parallel to the western way of living. Sivaraksa (1981) explains:

> The value scale of Western-type development emphasizes extremes. The richer the better, the capitalist applying this to the wealthy, and the socialists to the laborer. The quicker the better. The bigger the better. The more knowledge the better. Buddhism on the other hand emphasizes the middle way between extremes, a moderation which strikes a balance appropriate to the balance of nature itself. Knowledge must be a complete knowledge of nature in order to be wisdom, otherwise knowledge is ignorance. Partial knowledge leads to delusion and encourages the growth of greed and hatred. These are the roots of evil that lead to ruin (pp. 54-55).

I had an intriguing experience happening to me one morning while visiting a friend in the United States; and I heard on the early morning news, "It's Barbie Doll's birthday today." Then later in the same week I noticed on an influential TV. commercial that it was "Big Mac's Birthday." And recently while shopping in a grocery store, my eyes caught sight of the cover of Life Magazine. The headlines: "HURRAH FOR THE BRA! Its 100 year old this month." And as I turned to page 88 and read, "Let us celebrate the bra, which this month turns 100, although it neither looks nor feels its age." All of these things lead me to think of Thailand, my home land. What do the Thais celebrate? What do they acknowledge? Questions burst in my mind like a fountain. While walking home it began to come clear that in some areas of Thailand, such as in the Northeast, people celebrate the blooming of the fire forest flowers. Amidst the boredom and idleness of the summer the heat suddenly encourages these flowers to bloom, to paint and decorate the country side. The red vibrant color of the flowers stir the hearts of the Thai people. Then it is time to celebrate, to greet the blooming of the flowers. The beauty of nature thus evokes the Flower Festival. As mentioned earlier, in the hottest month of the year the Thais celebrate the Water Festival. In a way, they greet and celebrate the changes of the seasons rather than feel that April is the cruelest month.

Most of the Thai Festivals seem to be closely related to the land and nature. Perhaps this is the strong influence of Buddhism which points to the harmonious existence between human kind and nature. Therefore Taoism and Buddhist philosophies coincide in that they both emphasize that human kind must live in harmony with nature, and obey the natural law.

Since nature means so much to the Thai people, it becomes the essential theme of Thai arts. Nature has so much influence on the Thai way of living that twelve ceremonies and festivals are evolved each year according to the seasons. There are reasons to celebrate in each month, and when one looks closely at the Thai calendar, it is truly a festival calendar.

Buddhism is an orderly of thought; a view not of this world alone, but of the universe. It provides an insight and understanding into the true nature of things. Buddha provides a system of analytical thinking called, "Yonisomanasikara." The Dictionary of Buddhism (Rajavoramuni, 1985) provides these meanings for Yonisomanasikara: "reasoned attention; systematic attention; analytical thinking; critical reflection; thinking in terms of specific conditionality; thinking by way of causal relations or by way of problem-solving" (p. 66). This system of thought will ultimately lead to the understanding of the "suchness," (Tathata) or "isness" of things. Further more, this system of thought is of no special revelation to some favored individual, but the outcome of a long continued endeavor on the part of each individual to arrive at a correct comprehension of life and its mystery. The Buddha re-discovered certain laws and sets himself to understand how they worked. His findings are confirmed by every fresh discovery of importance made by modern science. What the Lord Buddha discovered is a method of emancipation through enlightenment, namely, by complete understanding of, and living in harmony with, the laws that govern life.

Hence the ultimate goal of Buddhism is to attain niravana or enlightenment. It is the final state of existence where human kind dwell in the world without the concept of "di-

vision," the judgement of the duality: good and evil, true and false, beautiful and ugly, one's self and others, life and death, consciousness and unconsciousness should be discarded (Yanagi, 1973). "When a Buddhist reaches Niravana, he is in a state of complete peace. He understands what the world is all about. He no longer has to be reborn again and again into a life of sorrow" (Forman, 1966, p. 49).

According to Schumacher (1977), "[m]any of the great traditions have the idea of 'the way' at their very center; the Chinese of Taoism is named after Tao, the Way; the Buddha's teaching is called 'The Middle Way'" (p. 77). Therefore, Buddhism is sometimes recognized as a way of life, a path that leads to the liberation of the mind. It is a reflective inward journey. Buddhism is a religion of practice, it is the only way to achieve Niravana. By following the right path, which consists of: right understanding (of Buddha's teaching), right thought, right speech, right livelihood, right effort, right concentration, and right mindfulness, one will attain enlightenment. The right mindfulness or "Stipattana" appears to be the heart of Buddhist meditation. It is a means of establishing a high degree of inner calmness and quietude. In such a way, we come to see our inner being in detail, and the mind in this meditative state of absolute attentiveness and control, we see our true nature. To be mindful is not to be sitting in a mere meditative state, but to be fully awake in every activity undertaking. Thus the fusion of the mindfulness and the realization with one's daily activities is also the potent aspect of meditation. What has been said so far about the path to "liberation" seems to be rather religious and quite difficult to practice. Practicing mindfulness is in fact as simple as this:

Eat when hungry!

Sleep

when tired! (Suzuki, 1971)

A Path of Attaining Knowledge

I call this section, "A Path of Attaining Knowledge" because the way in which I gain insights into children's experience is like a path that leads a person to the door way of light. Four elements, evoking-inviting, prodding-inquiring, probing-investigating, and prompting-imagining seem to basic to my experience of reflecting upon the nature of children's experience of visual narratives. I would like to ponder upon "the dynamic interplay" (Van Manen, 1984) of these element.

Evoking-Inviting

The Little Boy and the Sparrow

Issa (1763-1827)

Once upon a time, more than a hundred years ago, there was a little boy named Issa, and he was a lonely little fellow, for he had no mother. One day when he was five years old, he was wandering about the yard, when he came upon a nest of baby sparrows in a tree. The tiny creatures were all alone. They too, had no mother. Issa's heart was filled with love and tenderness for the helpless little things. Perhaps they were lonely as he. So he said:

"You little sparrow,
Left without a mother, come I pray,
Come and play with me today" (Hearn,1925, p. 156).

The tender voice of the sparrows evokes this beautiful and gentle verse. For a hundred years this poem has been famous in Japan and many parts of the world. Just like an artist, before the researchers enter into a study, they too are inspired. And when one is inspired, one is moved by the force of aliveness-- one is evolved.

In the etymology of the word "to evoke" we find these meanings: "to bring forth," "to intrigue," "to enthrall," "to elicit," "to produce," "to stimulate," "to excite," "to stir," "to arouse," and "to awaken." Where as for the word "to invite" are meanings such as: "to summon courteously," "to urge," "to welcome," " to attract," "to beckon," "to lure," "to call." In interpretive inquiring the invitation emanates from moments that are

"spontaneous"--that are "out there" in the world--and the researcher's task is to note these "moments" or structures. Thus when the researcher "finds" these structures or moments, he or she notes them and proceeds to describe them. In the evoking-inviting, the researcher is awakened and at the same time is being invited or welcomed into the world being studied; in my case, I am entering into the world of the child. In this inquiry I am enthralled by the shapes, the lines, the vibrant colors, and the exciting stories created through children's visual narratives and at the same time these qualities invite me to come closer. The evoking-inviting is the point at which the researcher is encouraged to turn to "the phenomenon which seriously interests us and commits us to the world" (Van Manen, 1984, p 39). If we stop for a while and go back to Issa's story, how does he create this gentle verse? Possibly not right away. Indeed, there might be a brief pause while he carefully looks at the sparrow. In evoking-inviting too there is a pause, a beckoning, an invitation to come closer leading the researcher deeper into the phenomenon. Thus, in evoking-inviting the experience involves "a sensitizing of impressions, feelings, and thinking so that the researcher is seeing and listening in a different way" (Lim- Alparaque, 1986, p. 19).

In evoking-inviting, there is a kind of wonderment that arises not from mere curiosity. And in its openness, a breath of freshness is brought to the movement of the researcher's thinking and feeling. In a way, there is a compelling feeling that invites further questionings. Thus evoking-inviting is helpful to the researcher in that it is the starting point. Or metaphorically, it is the dawn of creation, the first step of a journey, or the prelude of a song if you like. Moreover, evoking-inviting, the "triggering" of ideas and concepts, leads the researcher to the essence of an experience. Evoking-inviting is an attitude that is "crucial to 'researching/questioning/theorizing' . . . a researcher is able to start from within and through a personal knowing and not-knowing, grasp the sharper contours of the questions" (Lim-Alparaque, 1986, p. 17).

Prodding-Inquiring

Metaphorically speaking if research is a sonata, evoking is the first movement of a sonata, and prodding-inquiring is the second. In the prodding-inquiring, the researcher looks more deeply into the realm of inquiry.

In its etymology the word "to prod" renders these meanings: "to probe," "to jab," "to shove," "to impel," "to accelerate," "to thrust," and "to push." At the same time if we look at the etymological meaning of the word "to inquire" we may have these meanings: "to hunt," "to search," "to look into," and "to seek information." In the prodding-inquiring, the researcher thrusts further to look into the true meaning of the experience which means that the mundaneness, the taken for granted-ness are transformed into deeper inquiries.

In prodding-inquiring, the researcher's mind is fully aware and in deep thought. Drawing upon Heideger's words, Van Manen (1984) refers to thinking in this way, "To think is to confine yourself in a single thought till it stands still like a star in the world's sky" (p. 40).

In other words, in prodding-inquiring, our inner most core begins to focus, the stream of thought is continuously flowing, many questions arise, and at the same time many ideas begin to flower. In the prodding-inquiring, the researcher is in the same stage as Silvers' (1982) "second voice," or the second step of analyzing data. At this moment the researcher attends more closely to the phenomenon. Prodding-inquiring entails a deeper inquiry for the meaning; and for forms which are best able to provide structure and language. Prodding-inquiring conveys a research-ing towards discovery. Perhaps this story of the life of the world renowned man, Albert Einstien, would give us a clearer picture of what is it like to be in a deep inquiry:

> One of my friends, Doctor Ram Manohar Lohia, went to see Albert Einstein. Albert Einstein had given him an exact time to come, but he went fifteen minutes early.
>
> The wife said, "You have come, that's very good. Have some tea, rest but we can't be sure when he will come out because he has gone into the bathroom. Even I cannot predict it although I have lived with him for thirty years now. It is unpredictable."

> Doctor Lohia said, "But he has given me a tentative time."
>
> The wife said, "He goes on giving times to people, and it is a constant trouble to me, because I have to look after those people, sometimes three hours, four hours, five hours."
>
> Doctor Lohia asked, "But what does he go on doing for five hours in the bathroom?"
>
> The wife said, "Don't ask-all kinds of things. But he particularly likes to sit in his bath and play with soap bubbles. In fact, it is there that he has discovered all his great theories. Playing with soap bubbles he is relaxed and he completely forgets the world."
>
> It was kind of meditation for him. He stumbled upon the Theory of Relativity in his bathtub. The whole credit goes to the bathtub! Playing with soap bubbles he was like a child: innocent
>
> And his wife said, "We can't disturb him, because one never knows where he is and to disturb him may destroy something beautiful that is arising in him" (Rajneesh, 1981, pp. 129-130).

What can we explain about this story? What is happening in Einstein's mind? Could we say that while he is playing with soap bubbles at that moment perhaps he is in the process of prodding- inquiring? As it is suggested by his wife, his mind is in concentration and probes deeper and deeper in one focus as in meditation. In the realm of meditation we often speak of these words: "zen" in Japanese, "cha-na" in Pali, and "dhyana" in Sanskrit. Chang (1969) explains the meaning of the word "dhyana" with these words:

> Dhyana comes from the root "dhi," meaning "to perceive," "to reflect upon," "to fix the mind upon"; while "dhi" etymologically may have some connection with "dha," "to hold," "to keep," "to maintain." Dhyana thus means to hold one's thought collected, not to let thought wander away from its legitimate path, that is, it means to have the mind concentrated on a single subject of thought (pp. 28-29)

In meditative thought, we see and hear things more clearly, and beautiful things take form because we are passive. The body is relaxed and the mind is at ease. As a result the imagination begins to operate actively. As the mind and the body rest quietly then the imagination goes into play. In prodding-inquiring, as in meditation, the researcher carries on walking in the journey of thought-listening and looking attentively at what the informants do and say in an inquiring way. At this movement the researcher keeps going back to each individual's experiences, in this case children's visual narratives, in order to

"re-sound," "re-view," "re-search," and "reflect." Soon something beautiful begins to emerge--the data begins to "speak." In prodding-inquiring, there is a reverberate, a "thinking-some-more." Indeed, at this time the thinking and understanding may not be clear yet. However, they are being refined every moment with the hope that the inner treasures may emerge.

Probing-Investigating

A Silent pond.
A lotus emerges,
To greet the morning sun! (Vorapassu, 1989)

There is a pond that is calm, clear, and silent. A veil of white mist is lingering over it. The cool morning breeze makes the clear water ripple. In this pond, lotuses are growing. Under the lotus leaves the fish, turtles, and frogs are peacefully swimming. But one day, something beautiful happens. At the bottom of the pond one of the lotuses begins to flower! This flower is growing everyday. Now, its beautiful stem is in the middle of the pond. Then it grows longer and longer reaching the surface of the water. One night the whole flower emerges. The next morning it blooms, its delicate petals dancing in the cool breeze, greeting the morning sun.

Doing research is like the growing of the beautiful lotus. It is an ongoing process, a long reflecting endeavor. If we take a close look at the etymological meanings of "to probe" and "to investigate," they both convey similar meanings: "to explore.""to follow up," "to pursue,"and "to delve into." Here at this point the researcher delves deeper, explores further and even harder, which means that my senses become sensitive to children's languaging and drawings. It is the attentive reflection in which, "the researcher may come closer to the elusive shifts in the atmosphere of experience" (Lim-Alparaque,

1986, p.22). In a way the researcher's thinking is being refined at every moment, and the understanding becomes clearer.

In prodding-inquiring, there is a different kind of listening and looking. Palmer(1969) states, "It takes a great listener to hear what is actually said, a greater one to hear what was not said, but what comes to light in the speaking" (p. 234). While prodding-inquiring one's thinking is at the generalized level. Probing-investigating brings the researcher even closer to the phenomenon under investigation. While probing-investigating, thinking sometimes moves to the prodding-inquiring, and then back to that of probing-investigating. Meanwhile the researcher's thinking is being refined. Finally, one day the "lotus blooms!" In the overflowing of joy a theme is discovered, and then more themes begin to emerge. Like the lotus in the pond; at first one begins to bloom, then there is another, and another. Soon the whole pond is decorated with the beautiful colors of the lotus. And similarly the researcher finds many different themes.

Lotus is a beautiful symbol, a great symbol of the East. This flower holds an important position because it is a symbol of wisdom. In Eastern art Guan Yin is sometimes depicted standing on a lotus, the Buddha and Visnu, the Hindu god are also depicted sitting on the lotus. We know that Zen and the lotus are closely related for Zen comes to life because of this flower.

Once the Buddha was seated among his disciples in a pavilion on the mountain, a king came to him offering him a lotus flower and asked him to deliver a sermon. The Buddha remained silent for a long time then held up the lotus and gazed at it with perfect silence. At that moment, only Mahagasyapa could understand the silence, he responded to the silence with a smile. That day Mahagasyapa was in full bloom just like the lotus. The Buddha handed the flower to Mahgasyapa and announced that Mahagasyapa attained wisdom, he was enlightened.

In probing-investigating, there is also an understanding similar to what Lim-Alparaque (1986) calls, "a stepping back" like an artist who steps back to examine a work of art.

> When we see the wholeness of a thing from afar that is the true seeing; in the near view trivial details engage the mind and prevent us from seeing the whole, for our powers are limited (Tagore, 1958, p. 11)

In the evoking-inviting the researcher experiences the "Ah!" of wonderment, while in the probing-investigation it is an experience of the "Oh!" of knowing, the researcher enters in with understanding. A dark veil is lifted, the knowledge is attained, questions melt, and evaporate. The inner treasure is found. It is like sitting on the lotus, the flower of wisdom.

An old Zen monk had been practicing mindfulness for a long period of time, one day he was sweeping dry leaves in the lawn. His mind was in focus and harmony with the rhythm of the sweeping. Then as he swept a pebble and it hit the the bamboo

One click makes him

forget everything (Shigematsu, 1981).

In his long perseverance of the inward journey, the moment he hears the clicking sound, the old monk attains wisdom. In other words only one more drop of water is needed to fill the glass. In reflecting upon probing-investigating, we may find that in a way this is the ripening stage, and if it is a journey the traveller has reached the destination.

Prompting-Imagining

In probing-investigating the researcher discovers the meaningfulness of children's experience in composing visual narratives. But prompting-imagining takes the researcher to the final step. Just like a traveller who has come home from a long journey with beautiful gifts and many exciting stories to tell about the enchanting lands that were visited. In this movement of prompting-imagining, insights into pedagogic implications began to arise. In other words, how can we use the knowledge we gain to help our children. What

do we do? What learning experiences will lead our children to be reflective, imaginative, caring, and sensitive? How can we transform a hallow bamboo into a flute to make beautiful music? How can this knowledge help us in terms of preparing learning experience so that the children will function from the "heart" not merely from the "head?" How could these insights assists us in the realm of teaching and learning so that the children will not solely depend only on the teacher's words, but will use their own experience to find knowledge? These insights that the researcher gains are like the roots of a tree, subtle, invisible but powerful, it is at the roots where the work is! And it is from the roots that many things happen, a new flower will bloom, a new river is born, and a new poem sings to the world.

What is it like to look into child's experience of visual narrative? I have put forward a metaphor of the way in which I perceive the story drawing experiences of children within the structures of evoking-inviting, prodding-inquiring, probing-investigating, and prompting-imagining. Nevertheless, each structure is like a phase of the moon. There is the new moon, then the first quarter emerges which is like the moment of evoking when, out of darkness come light. The moon gradually appears bigger, as the thinking is refined. As the moon becomes even brighter, we call it a half moon. Similarly, thought process becomes more clear, more available to give light and to be seen by others. And finally we reach the full moon. All is understood and clear, both visible and illuminating.

Or we could say that the structure of evoking-inviting, prodding-inquiring, probing-investigating, and prompting-imagining is like a colorful rainbow in which the colors appear as an integrated whole. With our eyes we do not see each color distinctively separate. There are many colors, but we cannot really tell where each color begins. They blend together like the ripples and the water, when one moves the other moves. What is fascinating about the rainbow is that it is a wholistic thing. There are seven colors and yet we cannot really see seven of them at once. The colors fuse beautifully together. The

spectacular beauty of the rainbow lies in its transparent ambiguity in the simultaneous integrity of unification coming from the blending of each color into one luminous object.

Portraits of Visual Narrative Composers

During an eight month period, I invited four children to join various drawing sessions which took place in out-of-school settings where I could observe them draw pictures and discuss the experience. The way in which I obtained these beautiful children for my study is quite interesting. When I told one of my friends about my study, she said that she would be glad to let me have her two children, Ian (age 8) and Mizzy, (age 6) as informants. I was very fortunate to have them for my study as they both loved drawing and had many exciting ideas to share. I casually started to collect drawings from the children and continued to look for two more children.After a month of searching, I decided that it would be best to have children from the same neighborhood as Ian and Mizzy so that I could pick the children up for the drawing sessions and take them home afterwards. Therefore, I went to an elementary school close to Ian and Mizzy's home and introduced myself to the grade two and three teachers. I told them I was a university student looking for two children for a study concerning visual narratives. I explained that the children must enjoy drawing, and currently live in the neighborhood. The teachers gave me the names of such children and during recess I had a chance to talk to Fadwa and Bader. The next day, I telephoned their parents and arranged to meet with them to obtain their permission for their children to participate in my study. We arranged to have drawing sessions on Thursdays at Ian's house, and on Saturdays at my apartment.

In one of the first drawing sessions, I asked the children to draw a picture about themselves. The purpose was to get to know more about each child (Plate II.1).

Plate II.1 Portraits of visual narrative composers

by

Mizzy, Fadwa, Bader, and Ian

This is Mizzy:

> Mizzy drew a picture of a girl with long hair playing with a ball in the yard. She said: "This is a picture of myself playing in my back yard. I love to play. I enjoy playing a whole lot, and I love chocolate, and I am 6 years old."

Let us listen to Fadwa;

> Fadwa asked me to sit beside her while she was drawing. Using perhaps one of the oldest techniques of drawing (the one that would have been familiar to the Japanese potters), Fadwa dipped her forefinger in the paint and slowly drew grapes on the green piece of paper that she selected. When she had finished drawing grapes, she reached out for the brush to continue painting and then Fadwa began to unfold a story about herself: "I'm 8 years old. I love painting, specially with water colors. These are my favorite fruits. I love grapes; These grapes are on the table, and I also love oranges, grapefruits, and plums."

Bader:

> Bader who is six years old and loves sports, especially hockey, depicts his ultimate dream of attending the Olympic Games. "This is a picture of myself joining the Olympic Games, and I'm number one. I won lots of metals and trophies. That's the end."

And this is Ian:

> His swimming lesson inspired Ian to draw a picture of a boy holding on to a red balloon. He has just about to jump into the swimming pool from the diving board. Ian said: "I've just come back from my swimming lesson today. This is a picture of myself, and I'm going to dive. About myself? I'm helpful, nice, imagine [sic], lovingful, and cute. And I'm 8 years old."
>
> When I asked him to explain what he meant by "lovingful," he said, "It means full of love."

Chapter III

BUNDAL- JAI: INSPIRATION

I once heard this beautiful story about a Thai musical instrument called "Kaen":

> There was a hunter who lived in Isan or the Northeastern part of Thailand. One day, he went into the forest to hunt as usual. He climbed up to the stand which he had made between the branches of a tree. It was a very hot day. He waited and waited hoping that the animals would come out for a drink. However, there was no sign of an animal around the pond. It was unusually quiet. Soon he became tired and sleepy. A few minutes later he fell asleep and began to dream. He dreamt that he was walking by himself in the forest and he heard a singing voice of a bird called "Karavake" (in English, a nightingale). He was captured by Karavake's beautiful voice. When he woke up, he still could hear the beautiful voice of the bird in his head. The enchanting voice was embedded in his memory. He was so moved that he decided to return home where he shared his dream with his daughter. His daughter picked a leaf from a tree and began to blow it into a song asking him if it was close to the beautiful sound of the bird. The hunter shook his head in reply. She then gathered some reeds, made holes in them and began to play her song to her father. Hearing the beautiful song, the hunter was indeed delighted. The music from the reed sounded exactly like the enchanting voice of Karavake. And this is how "Kaen," a musical instrument widely play in the Northeastern part of Thailand, evolved (Part of the Thai oral tradition).

Nature seems to be embedded with multitude of poems. As an old one stops, a new one emerges. To a poet, there is beauty in everything that is seen and heard be it a crowing of a rooster, the chirping sound of a cricket or even a harsh sound of a crow. This world seems to be an endless place for inspiration to create a beautiful work of art.

In the Thai language, the notion of being inspired and moved to create a work of art is beautifully described in the word "bundal- jai." This compound word comes from: "bundal" and "jai." The etymological meanings of "bundal" point to: "prompting," "moving," "becoming," and "begetting." Bundal-jai is like the moment which inspired the drawing called Music Fruit.

The children are casually seated; Mizzy and Fadwa look comfortable and relaxed sitting at the big table. Bader and Ian share the long coffee table in the middle of the room. Each is absorbed in their own drawing.

Fragranced felts are included in the collection of drawing materials. Bader seems to be deeply impressed by the novelty and the bright color of the felts. He takes the whole package to the coffee table and begins to intensely examine each pen, and beams as he opens the felts, sniff them, and makes lines on a piece of paper. He comments,

This is mint. How nice!

Pink, this is watermelon, very good.

Blue, blueberry, I like blueberries.

Now, let me see, red is cherry. Wonderful!

The beautiful fragrance, together with the bright colors, seems to stir Bader's heart. With excitement, he exclaims, "Ah! I know what I'll draw!" Soon lines, colors, and various kinds of fruit begin to emerge. Each fruit is drawn according to the scent of the felt: turquoise-mango, pink-watermelon, blue-blueberries, red-cherries, and so forth. When he finishes, Bader smells the fruits that he has drawn on the paper. He is indeed impressed with the fragrance of the fruits. Eagerly he passes his drawing around and encourages other children to smell the beautiful fragrances. With the "ooh's" and "ah's" and the gasps of excitement, the children admired Bader's work. The exquisite color and the enchanting scent of the felts seem to inspire Bader and prompt him to create a visual narrative called The Music Fruits:

> Once upon a time, there was a place where it had lots of fruits and candies. There were licorice, cherries, blueberries, mint, watermelon, oranges, cinnamon, grapes, melons, and mangoes. There were lots of them. It was for Grover, Cookie Monster, and Big Bird, but the Cookie Monster just can't wait until he eats. So he went to the refrigerator and took all of the food and ate it. Now Big Bird won't eat after he had the music and Grover can't too. But they didn't care. Any way they ate other stuff too. So they sang the music. It was called, "Rock On Your Feet." And so Oscar was invited, but Oscar thought, he won't join it. They didn't care any way. They all sang. The end.

Bader's visual narrative was inspired by the fragraced felts. When Bader is absorbed in the beautiful scent and colors, he is also absorbed in imagination. Like a flash of light, there is an eruption of ideas and Bader's story drawing emerges. The fragrance

opens the pause, evokes an "Ah!" of joy, "I know what I'll be drawing!" The fragrance of the pens beckons Bader into the world of imagination. Perhaps there are indeed moments of evoking, an eliciting of images, an experiencing in the moment of pausing that precede the actual rendering a work of art.

In a way, the notion of "bundal-jai" points to the meaning of "heart" in the word "jai." This word is associated with a variety of expressions: "jai-dee" (good hearted), "jai-karuna" (kind hearted), "jai-rai" (cruel hearted). We speak of "pratub-jai," being engraved in the heart as to mean to be impressed. The word "jai" also holds other meanings such as "to understand." In Thai, for example, the sentence "kaw jai mai" translates as, "Do you understand?" The word "kaw jai" refers specifically to "understand." Literally, "kaw jai" to understand thus means "to enter into the heart," to have absorbed something into the heart. The concept of understanding, as expressed in Thai, is thus "to evolve inside the heart." The mind or "jai" plays a very important role in the Thai culture, because it is believed that the mind is the origin of all things, especially in the realm of the aesthetic imagination. Therefore, the notion of "bundal-jai" points to the meaning of evoking from the heart, being moved from the heart if you like.

> We notice something, not because we were asked to notice it, but because it accidentally was there in front of us--and as we glanced at it, it became apparent that it had more to do with us than anything that was specifically brought to our attention (Lewis 1979, p. 21).

Artists seem to be constantly thrilled and enchanted by things around them. In the world of music, especially, we hear many beautiful stories of how renowned composers obtain ideas to compose a song. Awakened by the beautiful singing voice of a laborer working on the house below one morning, Tschaikovsky was touched. The song seemed to have a haunting lilt. It was so beautiful that he composed a song. The melody of this song later became the rich coloring of Tschaikovsky's "Anante of the First String Quartet" (Browner, 1971). Mozart seemed to be constantly enchanted, he could see beauty even in unpleasant things such as an argument. The movie Amadeus, illustrates how an argument

between his father and his wife becomes an inspiration for one of his operas. Then when his mother in law furiously yelled at him, it was a stunning moment, and he was touched! The shouting was fused into an opera.

There is a beautiful story about the Thai National Anthem. The story is as follows:

One day during the reign of King Rama the VI (1910-1935) of Chakri Dynasty or Bangkok, the king asked Prha Janeduriyarnk (the title of the ministry of music, the word "Janeduriyarnk" literally means "the one whose expertise is music") to compose the National Anthem for Thailand. Indeed it was a great honor to get a chance to serve the king and the country. Joy filled his heart when he left the palace, and he began to think about the melody of the National Anthem. However, no matter how hard he tried nothing came out. Days and months had passed, but he did not succeed. Phra Janeduriyarnk tried harder to force himself to write, but nothing came out. One day, when he was about to give up, something miraculous happened, something beautiful bloomed in his heart! While sitting on a tram in Bangkok one day he felt relaxed; suddenly he heard the sound of the rhythm of the engine. It was the stunning experience, his inner core was touched, how joyful it was, he had derived the Thai National Anthem!

And thus if we reflect further upon this concept of "bundal-jai," it is not mere motivation. We know that the product of the art work is not superficial and contrived. In other words, the rendering of the art work emanates from the heart of the artist. This is shown in, The Little Sea, one of Ian's drawings.

Ian is playing in the living room of my apartment; pillows, stuffed toys baskets, fans, and other household "gadgets" are lined up on the floor. As I watch closely, these objects are no longer ordinary household objects, they become alive and animated. I now see and hear that Max, the turtle, and his little brother are moving. There is Koala who is also moving. These ordinary objects have given the imaginary meaning. The red-and-white pillows are a part of a boat, a stacking of rattan baskets is a deck, a bamboo fan is a sail, turtle dolls are Max the turtle and his little brother, a black and red pillow is a raft, a

teddy bear is Koala, and a fan is a glider. Gradually Ian becomes absorbed in a different world, the play-world perhaps. One moment Ian imagines himself as Koala and then the next he becomes Max, the turtle. "I'm moving, I'm rich, I'll bring a lot of money and other stuff." Different kinds of colored paper are cut up into small pieces to represent different types of treasure: copper is represented by brown colored paper, gold by pieces of yellow paper, money by pieces of white paper, and silver by pieces of tin foil from a chewing gum.

In order to express their imagination, children need time to experiment, to touch, and to play with concrete objects.

> Play allows an active, involved search through concrete forms, many of which would be too difficult to previsualize without such searching. Playing out unclear or abstract art ideas with real forms allows a thorough understanding of it (Szekely, 1983, pp.18-19).

Indeed there is a lot of changing and rearranging before Ian becomes satisfied with how the boat should look and the necessities that Koala needs to bring along. Ian is totally engrossed in his play-world. He does not even notice that he has given a completely different look to the living room. Small pieces of paper from preparing the treasure are scattered all over the floor. The coffee table, futons, and plants are moved to one side of the room to provide space for the sea. He turns the whole room upside down. This does not seem to matter to Ian who is so rapt in his play.

And then after a pause to prepare the treasure, Ian moves back to the boat and pins the treasure onto it. This time a red and black pillow is placed behind Max's boat. It becomes a raft and belongs to Koala who is also moving. Koala's raft is loaded with baskets and fruits. Koala travels by a glider.

Ian beams while he is playing, his heart seems to be filled with joy and happiness. Play has stirred his heart. The power of play is overwhelming. And thus after having put and effort creating something that is rather magnificent, wouldn't you wish to record it and share the beauty of your creation later? On a piece of black paper, Ian records Max and his

little brother and Koala's journey. A visual narrative, called The Little Sea, is gradually taking shape. With oil patels, Ian draws the journey on a black piece paper. Although black is used, Ian draws a big yellow sun to tell that it is day time. I enjoy watching Ian draw. He fully expresses himself. Each line is drawn with confidence. Look at the colors that he uses, they are very strong and powerful (Plate III.1). It appears that the drawing is very much like his play, but to make the drawing look beautiful Ian adds patches of blue clouds, a yellow sun, a red balloon, purple and yellow birds. How beautiful, how fascinating! As we talk about the drawing I ask Ian where the birds came from. He says that they are the birds from the mobile hanging under the umbrella in the corner of the living room. And when all of us are ready, the story of a journey begins:

The Little Sea

> There was a koala and two turtles, they went out to the sea and the turtles had a boat and a koala had a glider. It was a very sunny day. They took everything cause they thought they're gonna move. So this turtle (the one in front) brought his favorite plant, their two lanterns, and they brang of course their gold, their copper, their money and their silver and of course the koala brang the glider and all the pottery, her baskets and some of her food. On the way they met three purple birds that started pecking Koala so the koala got angry and jumped up the glider and fell into the water but Koala was saved by the two turtles and they met three yellow bird with black necks. They came swooping down at the two turtles so the two turtles got angry. They started jumping up and down and snapping at them, the biggest turtle, his name was Max, caught a yellow bird and fall into the water but the little one didn't. After his big brother fall into the water, he didn't want to snap at them anymore.
>
> And so one day, a beautiful clear morning, they saw a ballon tied to their boat. They kept it there and that was a sign for a turtle, and the turtles were happy and the koala was happy too, because he got a new raft. He was able to bring his raft where ever he wanted it to be. And then after their trip around in the sea, the two turtle go off the boat and the koala landed safely on hard cement.
>
> Did you know where the sea was?
>
> The sea was in the little alley in a big puddle. The end.

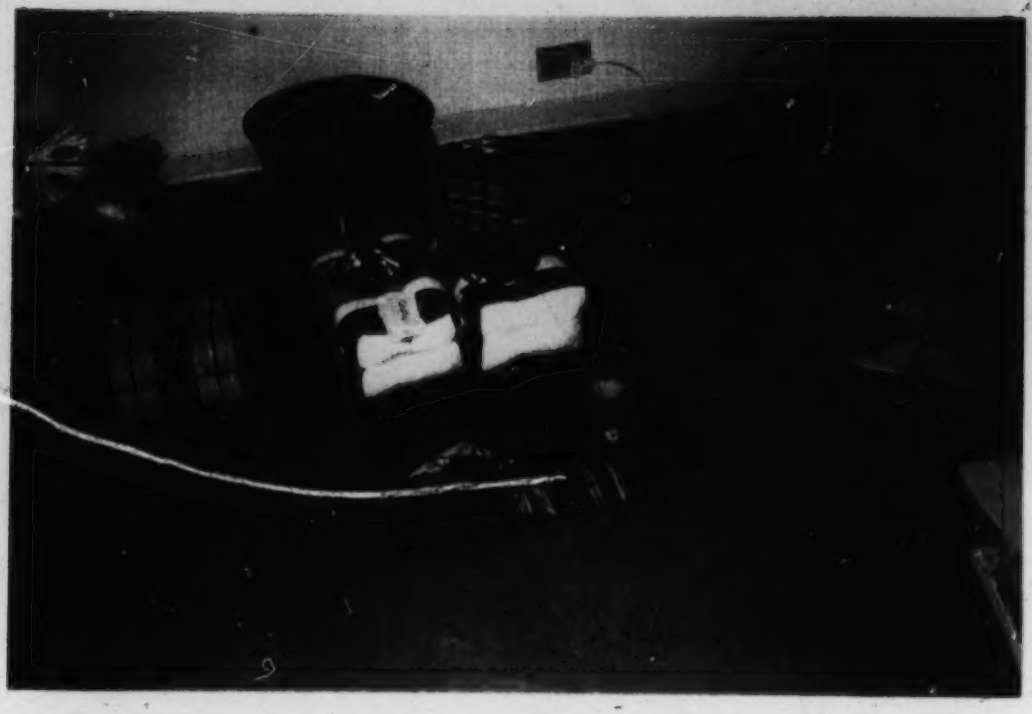
In a way, play evolves drawing. What makes play be such a spontaneous invitation to drawing? Perhaps the joy of play, the texture, the bright colors, the nice feeling from touching the pillows, and finally the openness of the shape of the pillows?

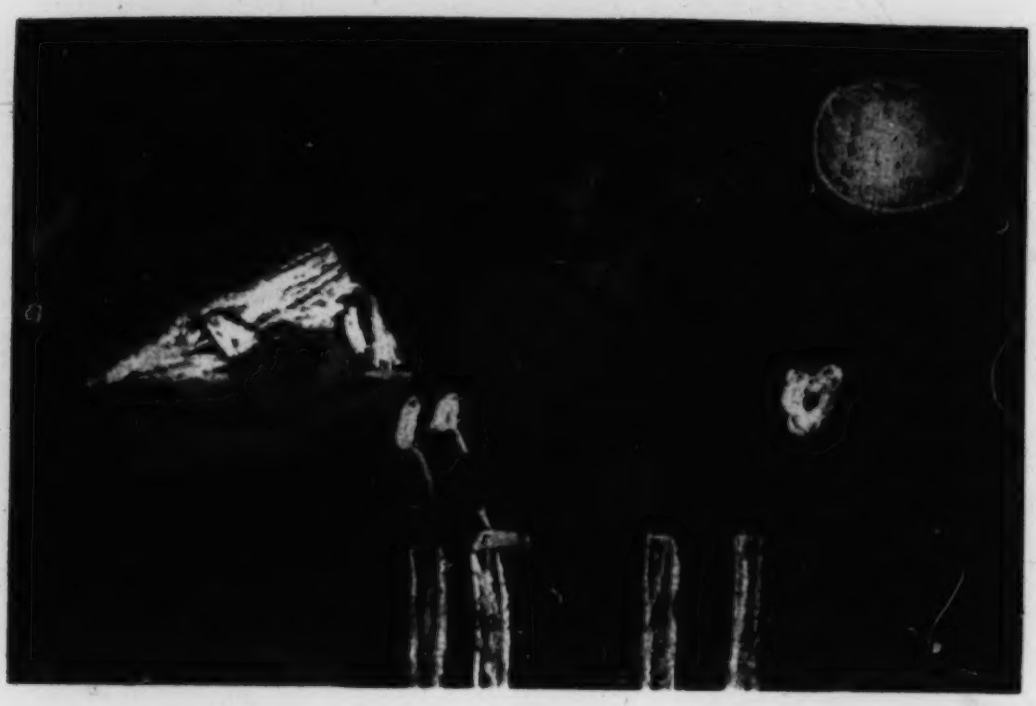
> Play can also involve imaginary landscapes and inner visions, thereby sharpening the children's references to memory and dreams. Response of

Plate III. I "The Little Sea"

by

Ian





> the eye to objects, movements, and colors; response to visual changes, formation of associations with images and vision; visual responses to sounds and smells; mind pictures; peripheral vision; self-perceptions; and the desire to explore dreams and the unknown are strengthened. . .(Szekely, 1983, p. 20).

There is another visual narrative that is invited and enticed by play. Mizzy is playing with miniature blocks next to Fadwa. She is building a farm. Her small delicate hands are busy arranging and changing various toys around her. "Look at my farm Fadwa. Do you like it?" she asks Fadwa with her beaming eyes. Fadwa looks at Mizzy's work and says that it is a very nice farm. "I like the mother duck and her little ducklings," says Fadwa. Mizzy uses different kinds of materials (wooden blocks, toy animals, modelling clay and modelling wax) to build a farm. It looks colorful, lively and full of many activities. The pig pen is built with yellow blocks. The mother pig has just finished eating her meal. There is still some food left. Mizzy uses a combination of modelling clay and modelling wax to make the food for the pig. "The piglets are hungry, she is nursing them," Mizzy softly whispers as she place a piggy toy and the little piglets in the pig pen. The place for the goats and the sheep is built next to where the mother pig lives. "This goat is thirsty, he is having a drink, " says Mizzy. There are horses in Mizzy's farm also. A cow lives next to the goats. Some chickens are freely roaming around the farm. At one corner of the farm is a little pond (blue modelling clay is pressed on the cardboard to form a circle imagined as a pond). A mother duck and her ducklings are swimming in it. The geese are walking in a line following one another. "This is a chicken and her little chicks. I'll put them here. Cluck, cluck, cluck." says Mizzy pretending to be the mother chick. It is this part of the farm (the tenderness of the mother chick) that evokes Mizzy to compose a visual narrative called The Lost Chick and afterwards unfolds this story:

> There was a goose who had four eggs. One day she heard her eggs crack. She heard something like this, "Kreak, kreak, kreak," then she looked under where she was sitting on her eggs. The eggs were cracking!
>
> When they were big, they took a walk and now their eyes were open. Now she was walking with her babies chicks but suddenly when she saw the chicks she saw only three chicks. She asked the owner of her farm to find her chicken but they couldn't find her so they looked in the pig pen.

> They looked where the goats were, they looked everywhere but they couldn't find it. Somebody saw something white and yellow. It was the little chicken! So they give it to the mother chick. And then she told the chicken never go any where again. And they lived happily ever after. The end.

When a child is inspired to draw then there is a sense of opening, an opening to the world in wonder. What are other openings to the world of wonder? For Ian, a mirror becomes that opening.

Ian walks to the mirror in the hallway to look at himself, he stands there for a while, then announces with excitement, "I know, I'll draw about a magic mirror!" He rushed to get a piece of paper and eagerly writes, "THE MAGIC MIRROR" in a column. Then he rushes back to mirror again, he puts the paper against his chest, and looks at those words in the mirror, puts the paper down on the floor and writes the word "THE MAGIC MIRROR" backward. Then he adds this number "2197" next to it. Ian stands in front of the mirror for a long time, looking intensely into the mirror, he smiles and then returns to the living room to continue drawing.

This is the inspiration. In a sense, the mirror has become an outlet for drawing. Children often have such a strong imagination and an ability to create that "everyday things" become their bundal- jai.

Thus Ian creates, The Magic Mirror, which included a set of two pictures (Plate III.2). In the first picture, Ian draws a boy in a superman uniform, a machine of some kind, a bird, and a robot. From these simple objects, a story begins to unfold:

> Once upon a time in the year 2197, there was a boy named Truce. He had a pet bird named Glider, and a robot called Zappy. One day, he went out to one of his mirrors and by mistake he and his robot fell in the mirror and they saw a lot of strange visions. All of a sudden, they fell into a giant hole. There was a strange kind of automobile and they went in it.

In the second picture, Ian draws a boy wearing a sweatshirt with the Dallas emblem, he is dancing next to a girl. Ian has incorporated Dallas into his drawing because that week, his mother has been away to Dallas attending a conference. Because Dallas has become quite important and meaningful, Ian includes it in his story drawing;

Plate III.2 "The Magic Mirror"

by

Ian

> Then there was some kind of nice music, the music called "rock and roll." (They were in Dallas.) His robot turned into a lovely girl and he [Truce] and the lovely girl started to dance. And they lived happily ever after with the music in Dallas too. That's the end.

A window pane or a mirror that we see in our everyday life could become what Lewis (1979) calls, "The beginning of powerful associations and events which, for the most part, lay just beneath the surface of the immediate perceptions" (p. 48). For Ian, the mirror is not just an ordinary mirror, it became a pool of imagination. Looking into the mirror is perhaps an attempt to see beyond the mere concrete sense of the mirror (Lewis, 1979). What is this child doing then when he is looking into the mirror? Daydreaming, perhaps? Indeed, it is a kind of activity that is not allowed in the classroom. Frequently we hear teachers say, "Stop daydreaming." But if we utilize this daydreaming in the right way, then this forbidden activity may not be as harmful as we think. Lewis (1979) gives an insightful comment concerning daydreaming with these words:

> If daydreaming could be experienced as a crucial step in approaching the mythic and poetic sensibility within, as well as the flow of intimations, images, and feelings which make up the inward state, then perhaps we were on our way towards giving the children a great sense of what was available to them on an expressive and imaginative level (p. 48).

It seems that there is a connection between daydreaming and inspiration. This is because inspiration is that moment when we are deeply captured by something. It is a moving experience, a sudden, spontaneous awareness, a flash of insight. In the inspiration, we acquire new ideas and concepts.

We never know what will stimulate such inspiration. For example, a book becomes a stimulus for Mizzy as she reads a wordless Berth Amoss' storybook entitled By The Sea, about a boy who flies a kite with his little puppy at the beach. Suddenly a gust of strong wind comes and the kite was flies away. The little boy also flies away because he is holding the kite string. The puppy runs along the beach following his master. Fortunately, he meets a lady selling balloons in the nearby park, he begs for a balloon from

the lady. The dog holds onto the big balloon and flies into the sky to rescue his master who is sitting on the cloud; his kite is now all torn.

As they (the little boy and his dog) are floating together in the sky, a black bird is attracted to the orange balloon. The bird flies towards them and pops the balloon. By accident, the boy and his little dog land safely at the beach where they were playing.

The episode in which the black bird popped the balloon fascinated Mizzy. She was deeply moved by the story and later composed a similar drawing to tell a story called, The Flying Puppy .

In the first frame, a bright sunny day is depicted. A little puppy appears to be sitting under his colorful umbrella. He is holding onto a balloon. His radio is playing. There is a plane and a bird flying in the sky. From this beautiful picture, Mizzy unfolds her story:

> There was a little baby dog, his name was Belly Button because he had a black belly button. And he always wears his panty. One day, he was sitting under his umbrella, and he saw it was raining, he said, "Ga-ga." And he had a walkman and the music played, "Do-Re-Me-Fa-De-Da." When he was there he had a balloon, a very large balloon.

In the second frame, the puppy begins to fly away in the sky. A big question mark seems to signify his bewilderment of not knowing what has happened:

> Suddenly, he started to fly up high. He thought he was flying, but it was just only a balloon that he was holding on. The balloon made him fly.

Finally, the last picture portrays the conclusion of the story. A bird pops the balloon, the puppy lands safely in his backyard.

> There was a bird there going to pop the balloon. The puppy said, "Can you tell me, what's going on here?" And then the bird popped the balloon. And the puppy said, "Wee! Why did you pop the balloon. And the puppy said, "Mama. I'm here now." The end.

Hence Mizzy creates her own drawing to tell a story. It appears that the inspiration is based on the final episode of By The Sea. Why is a wordless storybook such a powerful inspiration? Perhaps the reason is because children are able to use their own imagination

when reading such books. There is also an openness and freedom in these kinds of books which allows children to create by themselves.

The drawings that emerge from the power of bandal-jai are often remarkable. As children draw, their drawings are no longer controlled by the rules of strict time or structured situation. Children can invent lines, shapes, colors, and hues that lift and lead to create magnificent drawings. When children are inspired to draw, the inspiration allows them to freely express themselves. Such inspiration often comes from nature.

During the spring months, when the weather is fine we frequently go for a walk before we begin drawing. One evening as we set out for our walk, we decide that our destination will be the tennis court where we plan to stop and draw a picture. As we walk along, we notice that the whole area is covered with patches of yellow dandelions amongst the green grass. The children laugh and run ahead to explore the blossoms on trees. They sometimes stop to pick the dandelions and the cherry blossoms, excitedly run back to show me what they have picked, and then rush off again to the tennis court. As we approach the tennis court, the wind becomes strong, and the children decide that they would rather draw at home.

However, when we get back Ian says he would like to create a forest with the things (leaves, twigs, and flowers) that he has collected. Mizzy anxiously agrees that it is an excellent idea.

Mizzy's face fills with happiness while creating a forest. She sometimes whispers quietly to herself about what she is making. "I'll put some flowers here." "The pond should be at this area (as she flatten the clay dough on the card board)." And sometimes she shares with Ian and myself what she has just finished, "Look! My butterfly has red body and yellow wings." Soon the forest is finished. It looks very beautiful. Indeed Mizzy is very proud of it. A big tree stands in the middle. Near the pond, white and yellow flowers are daintily blooming. The colorful butterfly (made by yellow and red clay dough) is out searching for nectar. Two mice and a chubby bear (made from clay dough)

also live in the forest. Look at the blue pond, the mother duck is taking her babies for a bath. It is this particular part of the forest that inspires Mizzy to draw a picture called, A Strange Looking Beaver.

In her picture, Mizzy draws a blue pond with a mother duck and her ducklings swimming in it. The pond is surrounded by the blossom trees and there is a beautiful butterfly from the forest in the drawing (Plate III.3.A).

From the moment of inspiration, new feelings for forms, shapes, and language begin to emerge:

> One beautiful day in the spring, the flowers were blooming, the sky was blue. The butterfly was flying to the flowers. A mother duck was bringing her five babies to the pond for a bath. The baby ducks can swim very well like their mother. Then they met a strange looking bird. At first the mother thought he was a bird, but he wasn't. It was a Beaver! The beaver was very sad, he could not find his home. He began to cry. The mother duck said, "Don't cry, we'll look for your home." So they began to look and look. Finally, they found the beaver's home. And they lived happily ever after.

Ian, who is playing next to Mizzy is also creating a forest. He happily decorates the forest with leaves, twigs, and flowers collected from the nature walk. Then he places the animals which he has made from different colors of clay dough in the forest (Plate III.3.B). There is a story in this forest that Ian has created. The animals comes alive and are animated. A squirrel is looking at a flower. There is a green snake with red eyes behind him, the snake is moving closer and closer to the squirrel. Behind the green snake, a big eagle is standing. Its gigantic beak is at the tip of the snake's tail. The eagle is hungry. At the other side of the forest, a raccoon is riding on his car (a movable toy car) patrolling the forest. Ian is pushing the car around the forest pretending that the raccoon is a driving the car. The raccoon warns other animals about the dangerous snake and the eagle. Ian is so pleased with his creation that he begins to record the whole forest on a piece of blue paper. A brown squirrel looking at a flower gradually take shape on the paper. A green snake is behind him. A big eagle is draw behind the snake, and the raccoon is depicted on a white car. These animals live in the mountainous area surrounded

Plate III.3.A "A Strange Looking Beaver"

by

Mizzy

Plate III.3.B "A Close Call"

by

Ian

by big trees. In the sky, the baby eagles are flying, one of them is about to land. After Ian finishes drawing, this intriguing story begins to unfold (Plate III.3.B):

A Close Call

> One day, I heard from a little mouse and he was telling me a story about a squirrel, a snake, and a snake eating eagle. The squirrels when they looked out of their house, they looked so far and they thought they were being watched. He turned around in the grass. So he went back to looked at the flower. Then the snake appeared [made a deep scary voice]. He looked very hungry and he was watching him. Then the snake thought he was being watched too. He [the snake] looked up in the sky. All he saw was those eagles. Then these eagle became bigger and bigger. It was a snake eating bird [slowly spoke with soft frightening voice]! But the snake never knew that, he thought it was and over-sized eagle. So he let him stay beside him. But there was a spy close by. His name was Agent Racoonie, he watched. Then he put a mouse in his car and made him go round in a circle so the baby eagles would come. Four of them came, and they go, " Mother, I'm hungry, mother I'm hungry, mother I'm hungry," said the eagles. The eagle turned around, looked at the squirrel, so the squirrel ran home as fast as he could and he lived happily ever after and that's the end of my story.

This nature walk brings Ian and Mizzy pleasure and a fun time as they pick flowers, try to catch the grasshoppers, and explore the surrounding areas. The beauty of the trees and the freshness of the spring stir their innocent hearts and prompt them to create a magnificent work of art. In other words, the nature becomes the impulse, the inspiration of their expressions. It is said that nature was also a great inspiration for Beethoven's immortal work. He loved nature as much or more than any musician.

> A forest was a paradise, where he could ramble among the trees and dream. Or he would select a tree where a forking branch would form a seat near the ground. He would climb up and sit in it for hours, lost in thought. Leaning against the trunk of a lime tree, his eyes fixed upon the network of leaves and branches above him, he sketched the plan of his oratorio "The Mount of Olives;" also that of his one opera "Fidelio," and the third Symphony, known as the "Eroica." He wrote to a friend, "No man loves the country more than I. Woods, trees and rocks give the response which man requires. Every tree seems to say "Holy, holy" (Browner, 1971, p. 108-109).

Shared Inspiration. Within the theme called Bundal-Jai, there is a sub-theme called "interaction." Let us now look at another drawing episode. This time the inspiration comes from a friend's drawing.

Ian seems to be very excited about drawing. Ian tells Bader that he has a wonderful idea to draw. After they walk to the table together to get the paper and felt pens, they sit together on the floor next to the coffee table where Fadwa and Mizzy are sitting.

Before long, elaborate lettering for Super Animals begins to appear on Ian's paper. He carefully decorates these words as Bader watches. "Those are nice, very nice," Bader tells Ian with deep admiration. Bader turns to his paper and decides to draw super animals also. He attempts to draw the first picture; however he is not satisfied. He crumbles the paper and throws it away. Because Bader likes Ian's lettering so much, he asks Ian to draw the words "Super Animals" for him. Bader beams as Ian agrees to design the lettering for him. Bader gets the paper back and finishes his drawing.

Mizzy, is sitting near the two boys, witnesses what has happened. She tells me that, "Bader is copying Ian. He always copies Ian, you know." Bader sadly looks at the paper in front, his face shows a sign of guilt. I try to gently explain to the children that perhaps Bader is just borrowing the title page, and Bader does not intend to copy Ian's drawing.

I suggest that possibly a friend's work could give us new ideas for drawing. Bader smiles and the children go back to their drawing.

As soon as Ian and Bader finish drawing, they tell us the story of their drawings. This is Ian's story of the Super Animals:

> In this group of super animal, there is a bunny called Fire Bunny, a bear who came from China called Sammy Bear, a lizard from the desert called, the Green Iguana, there is a little mouse, a cousin of Mighty Mouse, his name is Atom Mouse. There is Wonder Cat from the Amazon Cat Tribe. Super Dog from the pet of Superman. Bad Bat, the pet bat of Batman; Robin, the the bird robin, the pet of robin, the person not robin the bird.
>
> These animals have special powers. But then, there is also the bad side.
>
> There is Cold Bunny and he wears a blue mask, he is blue. There is twirly, he's a brown bear. There is Penguin. He's got an umbrella gun. There is Cat Woman who is just the opposite of Wonder Woman all everything except she is a girl too. There is Purple Elephant, the elephant who tries to get Green Iguana. There is the Joker that a parrot. There is the Pencil then there is Dark Dog, the master of all dogs except the Superdog.

> What 's this? A big war! Fire Bunny is getting Cold bunny in the trap. Boy, isn't that funny! [Laughter.] Penguin is trying to shoot robin except he took the bird bruter and shot the bullet so it goes up. The Superman was so quick that he made a shield, the bullet hit the shield and landed right on the Penguin's hat.
>
> Wonder woman got all tangled up with Cat-Cat's robe so she twirlalizes them which is a special kind of power. It is like marinating something. Atom Mouse hit Pencil exactly when Pencil hit him. Complicating, isn't it? [Ian made a comment.]
>
> Green Iguana got the Purple Elephant in a trap. [Laughter.] So his black ray will rebound on him. And so Twirly got Sammy Bear in a trap too. "Oh, oh, oh," said Sammy Bear. The bat is taking himself by the shield of his magic things and then it rebounds him to the Joker. Superman's twirlizing Dark Dog and Dark Dog said, "Oh, oh," They won the good guys. The bad guys will escape. The end.

Let us listen to Bader's story of Super Animals:

> Super amimals! Animals . . . duper animals. The good guys were Bat Man, Superman, Wonder Woman, Fire Storm, Electric Bird, the Comet, and Fast Blaster.
>
> The bad guys were the Pencil, Penguin, Robin, the Joker, Cold Bear, Superdog, Green Elephant, and Wonder Cat. These two groups of super animals had a war. They faught and faught for ten days until they were very tired. The good guys got very tired. The bad guys won. The end.

If we go back and reflect upon the interaction between these two children, is Bader really copying Ian? Perhaps not. It would be too harsh to say that Bader copies Ian's drawings. Quite often we see that children play together and they draw together. In a way, their drawing is a social activity. Korzenik (1979) states that drawing for children is their social interaction. We may also notice that older children's drawings become models for the younger children's creation. Other children have only to see the drawing of others and they are ready to take wings and soar into an imaginative world of their own (Wilson and Wilson, 1982). This is perhaps similar to Ian and Bader's experience.

Why are older children's drawings such powerful inspiration for the younger ones? Perhaps because there is no communication gap as language and graphic expression are closely related and are on the same plane. Wilson and Wilson (1982) explain that "the drawings of older children are closer to the level of their own graphic attempts, they are both easier and most appealing to emulate" (p. 65). They further state that:

> Today the influence of children upon other children is still one of the most prevalent influence factors, and one of the most important. Children's drawings are infinitely more modelable for children because, as we have said, they are close to the level of the child who is doing the borrowing. By modelling his drawing upon those that are more advanced, and thus represent a level that has not yet been reached, the child may more easily reach the desired levels. Because they are closest to his drawing experience, the child most readily calls upon the memory of his own previous drawing image (p. 66).

Let us now go back and look at The Super Animals by Ian and Bader. Although Bader has included some of Ian's characters in his Super Animals and attempts to present each step of his drawing (the title page, the introduction of the characters, the battle scene, and the concluding frame) in the same procedure as Ian, their drawings are not the same. Each child expresses things differently. Ian, who is older, depicts his drawing in a more detailed and sophisticated manner. The battle scene, for example (Plate III.4.C and III.4.F), in which the good and the bad guys pair up for the fighting is very complex. The ending of the two stories are different as well. Bader ends his story by letting the bad guys win where as Ian lets the good guys triumph.

Is it wrong to borrow? Should we stop children like Bader and Ian from taking ideas from each other? Should we accept the edict that copying should not be allowed in children's art? Perhaps we need to take Wilson and Wilsons' (1982) explanation into account:

> When they were young children, artists Picasso, Beardsley, and Millas demonstrated a prodigious ability to copy the art of others. Indeed, borrowing, imitating, copying, modelling after--call it what you will-- may be one of the most important factors affecting the early development of artists.
>
> But won't copying activity adversely affect the child's own creativity and spontaneity--the child who is after all neither Picasso nor Beardsley nor Millas--and force him to be forever dependent upon such crutches? The matured artists may borrow a technique or a style or even an image from another and then in new contexts and in new and individual ways; children do the same. Most children borrow images and turn them to their own purposes (p. 66).

According to Wilson and Wilson, borrowing may not be harmful. On the other hand, it could serve as a firm ground for children's aesthetic images to develop. Moreover, having an opportunity to interact with other children while drawing seems to be

Plate III.4.A.B.C.D "Super Animals"

by

Ian

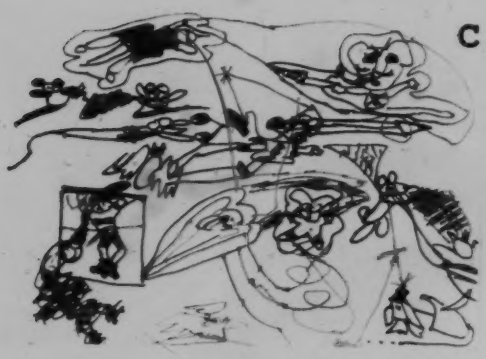
Plate III.4.E.F.G.H. "Super Animals"

by

Bader

SUPER
A

B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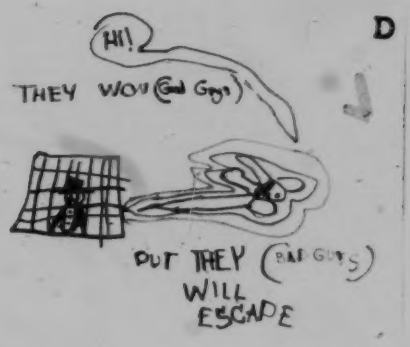
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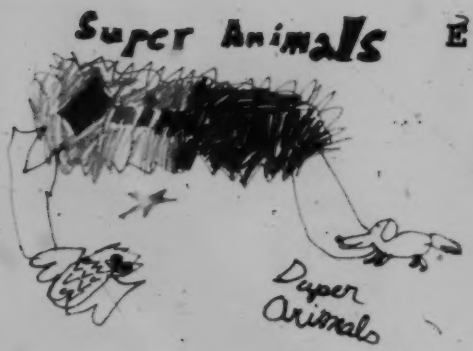
HI!
THEY WON (Good Guys)
BUT THEY (BAD GUYS)
WILL
ESCAPE


Super Animals
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beneficial for the children. In turn, this allows for their social development. If we take this thought further, we may say that the interaction is a natural way of learning, a peer tutoring. Perhaps we could say that this is a sharing rather than borrowing. It is a sharing of life, togetherness, and beauty. It is an appreciation. The following story relates such essence of being.

> Once upon a time there dwelt an old king in a palace. In the center of a golden table in the main hall, there shone a large and magnificent jewel. Each day of the king's life, the stone sparkled more resplendently.
>
> One day a thief stole the jewel and ran from the palace, hiding in the forest. As he stared with deep joy at the stone, to his amazement the image of the king appeared in it.
>
> "I have come to thank you," said the king. "You have released me from my attachment to Earth. I thought I was freed when I acquired this jewel, but then I learned that I would be released only when I passed it on, with a pure heart, to another.
>
> "Each day of my life I polished that stone, until finally this day arrived when the jewel became so beautiful that you stole it, and I have passed it on, and am released.
>
> "The jewel you hold is Understanding. You cannot add to its beauty by hiding it and hinting that you have it, nor yet by wearing it with vanity. Its beauty comes of the consciousness that others have of it. Honour that which gives it beauty (Rajneesh, 1978, pp. 27-28).

Drawing together is a delightful activity "because it permits each of us to reach out from our separateness to give to one another. All of us are both senders and receivers" (Korzenik 1979, p. 29). In other words, drawing heightens the opportunity for enriching the relationships among friends. Or perhaps we could say that in the interaction, lives touch other lives, stories entice other stories, and in the same way drawings evoke other drawings.

Let There Be Light

Indeed there is much to learn about children from this theme, "bujddal-jai." We have learned that children are spontaneous and naturally inspired. A good teacher should kindle the light within the child. In other words, the teacher should bring about the hidden creative force that lies hidden within each child. What is it like, then, to invite a child into

the landscapes of creation? How should we go about it? Perhaps the following story will give us some insights:

> There were once two teachers in the same school. Their field was art. One morning the first teacher looked in his little blue book. He read: October 25th, Friday--paint still life--subject "Apples." So he took some apples, washed and polished them, put them in a bowl and brought them into the classroom. He placed the bowl on a small table in the center of the room, adjusted the window shade for just the right light, stood back, regarded the still life from this angle and that, readjusted the window shade and, apparently satisfied said, "Today we are going to paint this bowl of lovely apples. Take your material and begin." The children began to paint.
>
> In another room the second teacher looked in his little blue book. He, too, read-- October 25th, Friday-- paint still life --subject "Apples." So he took apples, too, washed and polished them, put them in a bowl and brought them into the classroom. He was greeted with the smacking of lips and calls of "Yummy!" The teacher gave each boy and girl an apple. The children were not surprised. This teacher always did unexpected nice things, and they loved him for it. Then the teacher said, "Let's look at the apple." They examined it closely. "See how round it is, with full cheeks, a cleft on bottom, a big dimple on top with firm little stem jutting out from its center. See the color. This one is all red this has some green, this has some yellow.
>
> Now let's feel the apple. Do you feel the roundness and firmness and smoothness and hardness? See how your fingers glide over well-rounded surface." One child rubbed the apple up and down on his cheek.
>
> "Now let's close our eyes and smell the apple? What wonderful fragrance! What is it? apple blossom? Apple orchard?"
>
> "Have you ever listened to and apple? Keep your eyes closed and bite into the apple. Chew it and listen. And now, eat the apple. Taste its sweetness, its tartness, its crispness, its moistness. Roll it around on your tongue and enjoy its lusciousness. Swallow it. Now let's paint (Gezari, 1957, pp.149-150).

Now suppose we go back to the first classroom. What we see would be a very drab and dull classroom where children try in vain to "force" their paintings to look "right." Perhaps a sign of bordom shines on the children's faces. The room might be quiet and there is hardly any interaction going on, because there is no need to have any. We may see here only "students," not "individuals." And, further, their imaginations and the children's have been "crushed in their classes like flowers pressed between book leaves" Tagore, 1917b, p. 37). Each child has been forced and suppressed.

What about the second classroom? What is its atmosphere like? It is meaningful and rich with the tastes of experience. The class is neither dead, nor monotonous, nor

static, not a mere routine, but is alive and dynamic. Soon many beautiful paintings begin to emerge: a picture of a beautiful orchard comes into being from a student who listened to the apple; there are pictures of the spring shower, harvest, and market. Indeed there is not a single picture of a bowl of apples. The class is fun and joyful, like play, and as a result it becomes a celebration.

In creation there needs to be "light." These two teachers in the story both "see" the values of light, but in different ways. The meaning of light for the first teacher is the light in the room and the light on the object (the apples). However, the "light" for the second teacher is different. It is the light inside the heart. It is the light that leads to a creation, the sparking of ideas. He ignites the light that is hidden within the children. It is the evoking.

A good teacher "should be like a lamp where the potentiality of light is far greater in quantity than what appears as the flame" (Tagore, 1917, p. 173). In a sense a good teacher stimulate his/her students to keep the windows of their minds open and free.

A teacher of young children needs to be one who is childlike and who never grows old, one whose heart is green and young like the heart of a child. A good teacher needs to be on the same plane, and to forget that she or he is wiser. Rather than being there as the end of knowledge, he or she should be a kind sibling or friend who is ready to travel on the same path as the children. A teacher should be happy, joyful, and festive.

A good teacher needs to be alert and spontaneous just as the children themselves are, so that an experience in each day becomes profound knowledge, through being illuminated. A good teacher will not merely rush the children to meet the requirements to finish the textbook. A good teacher is one who gives the children "richer and more enduring experiences, lasting impressions, that will never be forgotten" Gezari, 1957, p. 149).

Chapter IV

TWI-LAKSANA: DUALITY OF VISION

Children engage in creating many visual narratives. Some are short, others are longer and woven into drawing and storying which expresses different moods and tones of feelings. Some are happy, some are sad, and some are quite humorous. However, what is fascinating is that in creating visual narrative, children use their experience and imagination. These visual narrative come from their ability of wonder, their innate wonderful imagination. What then is the portrait of a visual narrative? What are the characteristics of this kind of drawing? What do they do when they compose a visual narrative?

To have a better understanding of a visual narrative perhaps we need to look at the meaning of the notion of "twi-laksana" or the duality of vision. In the Thai language "twi-laksana" originates in these two words "twi" and "laksana." The word "twi" is derived from Sanskrit meaning two, and "laksana" which also comes from Sanskrit, means "form." Thus the word "twi-laksana" renders the meaning of two forms or duality of vision. Although it is called duality of vision, for it is composed of two forms, it is not seen as separate entities. Just as the two sides of a coin, the drawing and the narrative cannot "stand" alone, they are together as one. The drawing and the storying blend together as one to form, a visual narrative.

The portrait of visual narratives created by children is different from other kinds of drawings or paintings in that children experience two forms of art, drawing and storying together. In a sense when a visual narrative is created, it is born out of a communion of two forms, the visual and the narrative. The beautiful interplay between drawing and telling a visual narrative comes into life.

Telling-Drawing

Ian is engrossed in creating a visual narrative called, "Grand Shopping Mall" (Plate IV.1.A). The inspiration clearly comes from West Edmonton Mall. This drawing is depicted in graphic detail. It is alive with lines that show action and movement of the characters. West Edmonton Mall, which has clearly influenced this drawing, is the largest mall in the city of Edmonton and has a multitude of different activities and attractions such as rides for children. The mall is a tourist attraction because it includes a unique hotel called the "Fantasy Land Hotel" in addition, there is a very large shopping area.

Inside the mall there is a hotel, "Grand Hotle" [sic]. Look at the cars and buses, they are not static icons,--they move! Ian portrays the mobility of the cars by adding little circles behind them. With this simple technique, the car and buses come alive. Notice the people at different places in the mall, they move with different postures and motions. Look at the people inside in the restaurant. Some are standing, some are walking, and some of them are even sitting cross legged.

This shopping mall, like West Edmonton Mall, has a water park in it. There are many people at this water park which has been named "Swimming Pool Wild Waves," What are the people doing? They seem to be carrying something with them as they walk through the entrance of the water park. What about the people in front of the water park? They seems to be busy talking to friends and watching people entering the swimming pool. What is this child doing here? Ian's drawing of Grand Shopping Mall seems to be drawn in order to make sense of what an object is like(Wilson and Wilson, 1982). Creating a visual narrative is a child way of visually knowing. It is an image of experiencing. What is fascinating about a visual narrative is that it sets into the image, it is an interpretation of the real. Arnheim (1974) maintains that drawing behavior in young children is a mirror. In other words, drawings are representations of reality. What Ian has done in the drawing of Grand Shopping Mall is combining various aspects of West Edmonton Mall together. For example, since there is wild waves park at West

Plate IV.1.A "Grand Shopping Mall"

by

Ian

Plate IV.1.B "The Chipmunks Who Made A Mess"

by

Bader

EdmontonMall and there is an indoor pool thus Ian got "Swimming Pool Wild Waves." Ian does not call it West Edmonton Mall, he calls it "Grand Shopping Mall." It is not called Fantasy Land Hotel, but he calls it "Grand Hotel." There are buses and cars in his drawing just as at the West Edmonton Mall. In some way Ian tell us how he understands that mall. Ian's drawing thus tell us how he sees the world. Children express the essence of their experience through their visual narratives.

The drawing of Grand Shopping Mall, appears to be the kind of drawing that comes alive because there is a story to tell. Ian's story of the Grand Shopping Mall is woven about an exciting mall with multitude of activities. In "telling-drawing," the viewer is drawn into the many movement of the characters like being thrown into the the actual action.

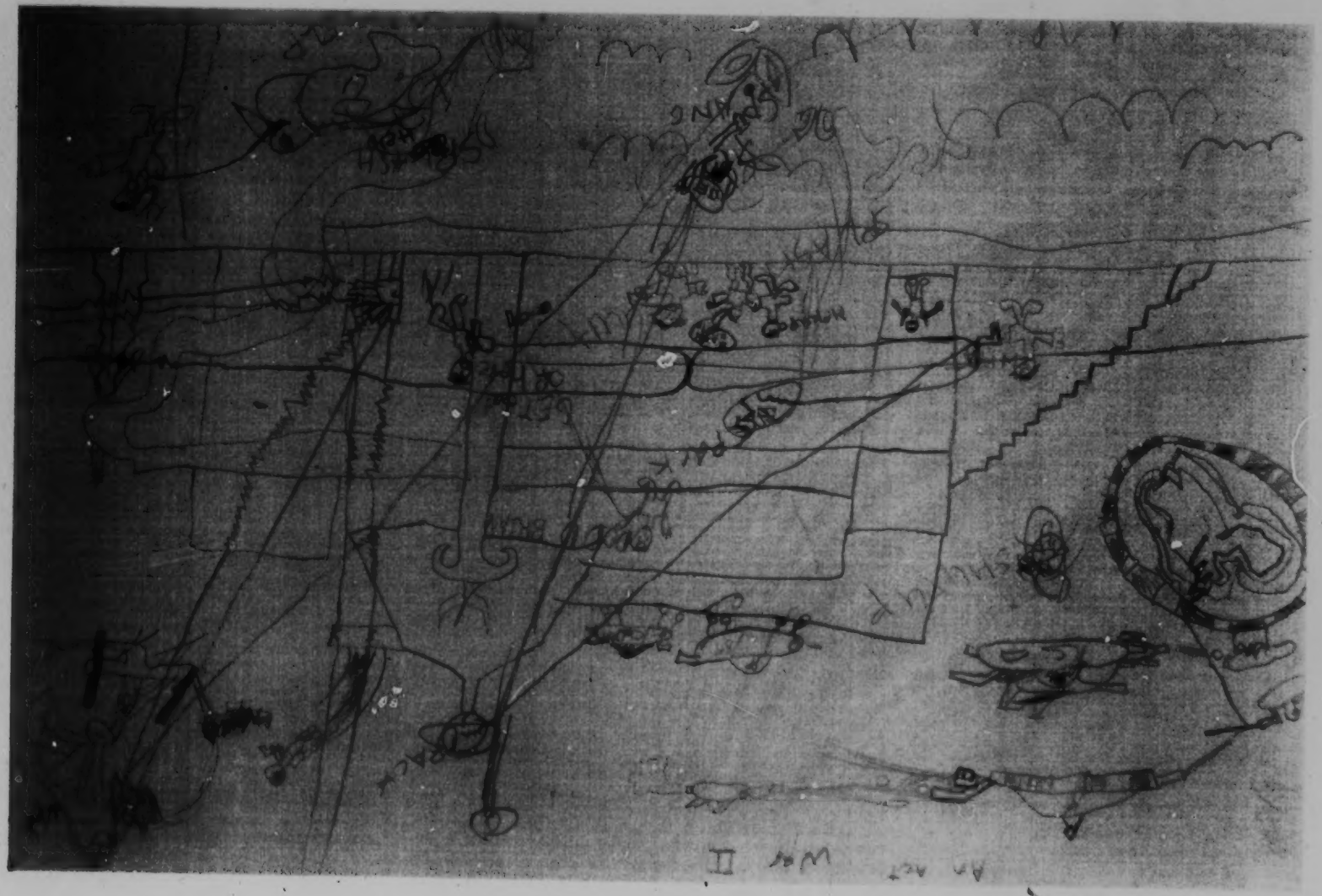
Bader also enjoys telling story through telling-drawing. An Act War II (Plate IV.2) is one of his powerful visual narratives. He draws people carrying guns, tanks, a fort, and towers. Soon he says, "They are fighting. They are shooting the enemy. Shoot!" Bader shouts. He draws lines to illustrate the travelling of the bullet. Then Bader talks again, "This machine is shooting him, he is shot, he falls into the water, splash!" Bader writes the word, "SPLASH." The drawing becomes more and more complex. Bader adds more and more people, towers, machine, and weapons. There are powerful tanks that can shoot an airplane. As the fighting increase the lines in the drawing also increase. The people are shouting, telling a friend to leave. Some are crying for help. Bader talks as he draws and makes different sound effect simulating the presence of war.

In this kind of visual narrative, the drawing comes alive. Each line "vibrates" with sound and movement. Look at the many actions of shooting, fighting, jumping, and leaping. Both scribblings and straight lines are used to represent the fighting action and the shooting. As mentioned earlier, when children create these kinds of visual narratives, they talk as they draw: "spang," "crack," "Do-Do Brain," Get out of here," "What!" "Shut up," and "Splash." This seems to be the main characteristic of telling-drawing. In a way, their

Plate IV.2 "An Act War II"

by

Bader



talk is their story. Thus this kind of visual narrative is a talking visual, it is a talking-drawing. A drawing that speaks.

Looking into these two visual narratives (Grand Shopping Mall, and An Act War II) is like looking into a panorama where we see the whole scene. The drawing is very complex, and numerous characters are involved in the action. In a way, this is like a living experience. An Act War II, for example, gives us a feeling of looking into the war. We are there in the action and with the pulsating sounds of the people and the weapons. We are looking into the whole experience: we seeing it, and we hear it. Because of the many actions, the viewer is invited into the drawing and becomes part of the experience. This kind of drawing is alive, throbbing, moving, and organic. To create a telling-drawing, the child's bodily action is involved. This type of visual narrative speaks to a child as lived and experienced.

But what is even more fascinating about these two drawings (Grand Shopping Mall, and An Act War II) is the media used was strictly black and white. The simplicity in terms of black and white is totally remarkable. The power of black and white is like the Yin and Yang. There is black and white, there is pencil and paper. There is a complementarity in terms of the content which is very complex, and the media which is simple. There is a Yin-Yang-ness about it where it is heavy with action, but is light with media.

When children engage in creating this kind of visual narrative, a telling-drawing, they talk as they draw and sometimes they act the scene out. Their talking, in a way, becomes their story. And while we were not present when this was being created we can still sense the sounds of the people talking and vehicles roaring. The unseen thing such as the sound emitted from the machine find form in a telling-drawing.

What then are the distinguishing features of this kind of visual narrative? What is its specialness? What sets this drawing apart from other pictures? There is evidence of the mobility, the movement of people, the dynamic throb that permeates the drawing "tells" a

story. And this is where these drawings are different from pictures drawn by children on other occasions. These visual narratives (telling-drawing) "relate" a story that come alive in the movement, the sounds, the actions of many characters, the details, and the items seen in the drawings. The drawings do not "sit" like photographs or "still" pictures.

Weaving-Storying

Bader and Ian are drawing together. When Bader sees Ian composes a visual narrative about music entitled, Lydia and a Plant with Strange Color, he is inspired. Bader finds a piece of paper and felt pens which is placed on a table next to Ian and begins to draw. "I'm going to draw Grover like in the TV." Using a yellow felt, Bader draws Grover in the middle of the page. Then he draws his jacket, it is a red jacket. Grover is wearing yellow shoes and red sock. Bader carries on with his drawing. Now this time with a blue felt pen, Big Bird is drawn to the left of Grover. He is wearing a red jacket and the tip of both wings are also red. To the right hand side of Grover, Bader draws Cookie Monster. He appears to be the smallest. He is also wearing a red jacket. Then Bader turns to me to show what he has drawn. He explains that Grover, Big Bird, and Cookie Monster are attending a musical competition. With joy I acknowledge Bader's work. Then Bader goes back to his drawing. "They are making music. I'll put the drum here." And so a drum is drawn between Grover and Big Bird. In front of Cookie Monster, Bader draws a synthesizer. "Where should I draw a guitar? Okay, a guitar will be here," Bader whispers and at the same time he draws a guitar. The guitar is very stylish. At that moment Bader sees the "musical chair" (shaped like a music note) that Ian has designed. He likes it very much so he includes a "musical chair" to the right of Cookie Monster. In front of Grover, Bader draws a microphone, which is also shaped like a musical note. Behind Cookie Monster is a big amplifier. After he has finished drawing, the rock concert begins. With a deep, loud voice Bader says and writes these words on the top of the paper, "Rock 'N Roll Music. Ya. Music ya." Bader pretends to be Big Bird and he makes

the sound effect of the drum. He changes role again pretending to be Grover playing guitar and he begins to say, "Yeh--yeh--yeh. . ." His face is filled with excitement and feelings. He is lost in another world. Bader's talking and singing makes the other children (Mizzy, Fadwa, and Ian) stop drawing. They look at Bader and begin to smile.

Now Cookie Monster joins in the show, he plays the synthesizer. Bader has great fun "playing music." Then I hear him say, "Alright very good, very good. This rock groups plays very well. They are the best. They won the first prize. They get a black jacket." My eyes dilate with excitement, Bader reaches for a black felt and begins to color the jackets black. Grover's shoes are colored black and the tip of Big Birds wings are colored black to match his beautiful black jacket (Plate IV.3.A).

As I reflect further upon The Rock Music what fascinates me is the transmission of ideas and images in children's drawing. When Bader saw Ian's "musical chair," he liked the idea so much that he included it in his drawing. And more importantly, Bader's Rock 'N Roll Music was inspired by Ian's drawing of Lydia And The Plant With The Strange Color. Children learn how to draw from one another. Wilson and Willson (1977) maintain that, "Young people learn to draw mainly through influence and imitation" (p. 5).

What impresses me and what I have learned from children creating weaving-storying is that as with telling-drawing they talk as they draw. Moreover, storying and drawing continues to grow as children add new objects. Each musician received a black jacket as an award. Bader colors their jackets black to illustrate that the musicians are now wearing their prize.

Weaving-storying in some way reflects a child way of thinking, a visual thinking perhaps. Arnheim (1969) states that:

> Thinking requires more than the formation and assignment of concepts. It calls for the unravelling of relations, for the disclosure of elusive structure. Image-making serves to make sense of the world (p. 257).

Let us look at another visual narrative by Bader in which actions are woven on top of other actions. Here Bader "spins" beautifully the visual and the story together.

Plate IV.3.A "Rock 'N Roll Music"

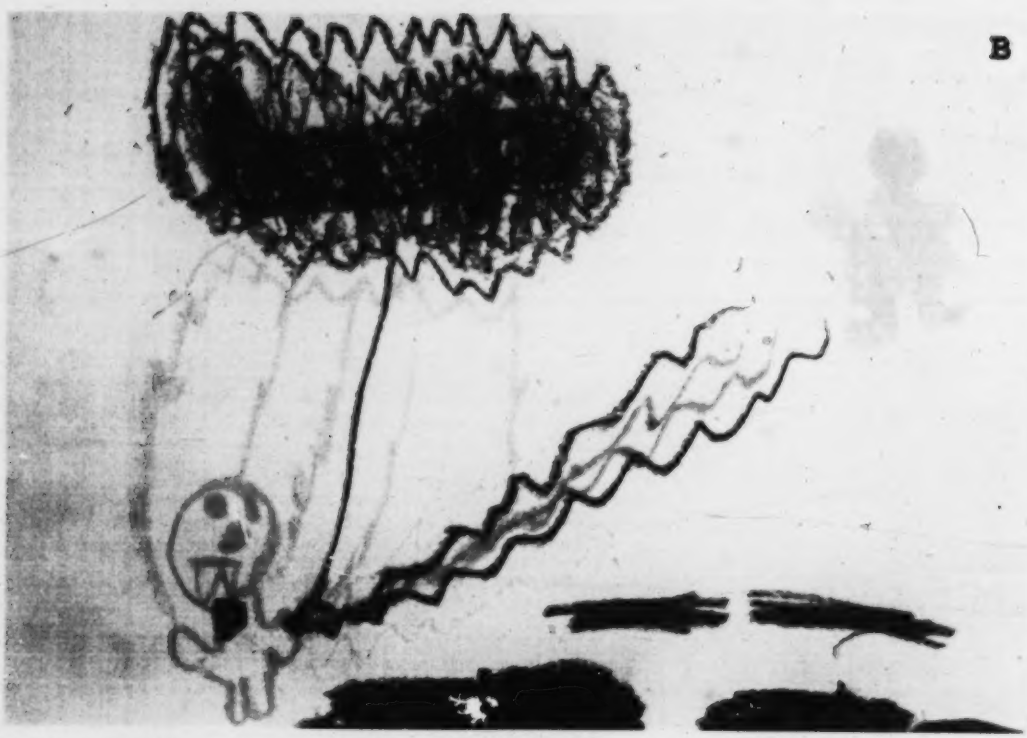
by

Bader

Plate IV.3.B "The Little Vampire"

by

Bader



B

Bader is composing a visual narrative called The Baby Vampire (Plate IV.3.B). He decides to draw with oil pastels. That moment is like magic as Bader draws and tells his story! He picks up a pink pastel and draws a vampire with sharp fangs at the bottom of the page. "This is a baby vampire. He is means. He always wants to do evil stuff," Bader whispers to himself. He pauses to get a new pastel. This time he uses a black one, "He has a gun. He will shoot a plane with his gun. There's a plane from New York," Bader says. He draws a brown plane on the top of the page. The vampire begins to shoot the plane. "Tew, tew, tew," Bader makes the sound effect, and a red line is drawn from the gun to the plane. The little vampire does not stop. "This time he makes a thunder to break the plane," Bader continues. Green lines are drawn from the vampire to the plane indicating the vampire's power. With an abrupt and ravishing gesture Bader uses red to create the image of fire around on the plane. The red flames engulf the whole aircraft. "There is a fire, a bigger fire. Explode!" Bader shouts. Then he lowers his voice and softly says, "It's [the baby vampire] gonna turns that into stone." Bader colors the plane black. The plane that was once red now becomes black like a huge piece of charcoal. But soon a blue angel appears in the sky. She is surrounded by a veil of white cloud. "Enough is enough, vampire. I have to stop you. I'll make you weak," says Bader pretending to be the angel. "Blood! Look at this blood. She makes him die." While Bader talks he colors the bottom of the page with a red pastel, and he continues with the story as he colors a big pool of blood. "You are weak, you are weak, you cannot do anything."

What is this child doing? Is this perhaps one of the meanings of young children's drawing? Does it tell us that children draw just for sheer joy? Is drawing to them like a make-believe play, a means to explore? Does it tell us that this child knows the connection between color and an object?

There is evidence that this visual narrative, The Little Vampire comes to life through the relatedness of color and object. Red is used to mean fire and blood. Black is charcoal.

White is a cloud, a veil of goodness, and perhaps purity. And to express the gentleness and yet power, Bader uses sky blue to draw an angel. He seems to know that colors are feelings.

Bader composes this kind of visual narrative weaving new action into the basic creations. Metaphorically speaking, this way of creating a visual narrative is like weaving in that there are pieces that run through and there are pieces that run across. As we start weaving, we build from the basic frame. We weave things in and out and gradually the form changes as we weave. It begins to take shape, it can change color, and sometimes the colors overlap to create patterns of light and dark. The weaver starts weaving in a simple way, and yet as the object grows so does the texture.

In a way, weaving-storying is dynamic meaning making. As Bader adds new objects the drawing changes and the meaning changes also. When weaving, there is the basic piece, the warp. Then it is run through with the woof. Bader's brown plane would be like the basic piece whereas the red flame, and the black of the charcoal that woven through become the woof; this creates the pattern. Similarly, for the other visual narrative, The Rock 'N Roll Music, the orange jacket is the basic part, the warp, and the black jacket that the musicians put on later is like the woof.

Although, the drawing may appear to be an overlaying of action, there is a blending or meshing between the the drawing and the story. The narrative is supplemented by the continuation of the art. The narrative and the visual interact and they build on each other. It is a weaving of a story in a sense that there is an interchange between the word and the drawing. They move back and forth. This weaving creates the tension in the story.

A weaving-storying indeed is a unique experience. Children weave new objects to the basic one to form the visual narrative fabric. New things take form: colors, lines, texture. As a result new meanings and understandings emerge. For the child, perhaps creating a drawing in such a way is like a weaving of wonder, a weaving of magic.

> Magic weaves in and out of everything the children say and do. The boundaries between what the child thinks and what the adult sees are never clear to the adult, but the child does not expect compatibility. The child himself is the ultimate magician (Paley, 1981, p. 29).

This is the beauty of childhood. In weaving-storying, the drawing and the narrative beautifully interlaces allowing the visual narrative to continue to grow.

Sequencing-Storying

What does a child create in visual narratives? What do their visual narratives reveal? What does the child do while creating visual narratives in a sequencing-storying way?

Children sometimes compose visual narratives that include a beginning, a middle, and an end as shown in one of Ian's visual narrative. Ian is sitting with a piece of paper in front of him. He is playing with a pencil, twisting it back and forth and then turns it in a circle. Perhaps he is waiting for a drawing idea to emerge. Within a short time he exclaims anxiously, "I know what I'll draw." Then he writes, "MONKEY AND THE LION," on the top of the page. Down below he writes, "ONE DAY." Then softly he whispers, "I'll put a palm tree here, a trap, a lion, and monkey, this monkey is swinging on the vine." Soon frame by frame the whole story emerges (Plate IV.4.A). This story, Monkey and a Lion, is perhaps inspired by one of an Aesop Fables, A Mouse and a Lion. Ian shows me his drawing and slowly he begins to tell his story:

> One day a monkey was freely and happily swinging. He was not being careful. He was caught by a lion. The lion roared furiously as he said, "I caught you." The monkey was shaking with fright asking for his life. With his trembling voice he said, "Please let me go and some day I will help you," The lion agreed, and he let the monkey go. But one day something really bad happened to the lion, "Oh no, I am trapped," the lion roared and cried. The monkey heard him and recognized that it was the lion who did not kill him. He swang on the vine and rushed as fast as he could to help the lion. "I'll help you," said the monkey. The monkey freed the lion, he saved his life. "Thank you," said the lion. They said good bye and lived happily ever after. That's the end.

Plate IV.4.A "Monkey And The Lion"

by

Ian

Plate IV.4.B "A Jumping Frog"

by

Ian

Like cartoon strips, Ian has depicted a drawing to tell a story. In this kind of visual narrative, we still could guess the story since a drawing in each square has given enough information to tell a story. Each square has provided sufficient information for the eye to "hear" a story.

In its aliveness, Ian has depicted a visual narrative with a beginning, a middle, and the end. Each frame holds its own beauty, each frame is linked and "tells" a piece of the story. In a metaphoric sense, this is perhaps like a beautiful garland of flowers that an artist has strung together with flowers of different colors and fragrance to form an exquisite lei. Brilliant (1984) says that:

> When a story is presented in fixed visual images, as in painting. . ., the figured images, being of material substance unlike sounds, do not disappear. Unlike words, even those fixed in a written text, visual images have an almost infinite capacity for verbal extension, because viewers must become their own narrators, changing the images into some form of internalized verbal expression. Accordingly, when artists arrange their images in a definite visual field, viewers are at greater liberty than listeners or readers to choose how and in what sequence to experience them (p. 16).

Let us take a look at a different kind of sequencing-storying. This time the movement of the story is portrayed in different squares akin to that of animated cartoons.

Ian is drawing at the coffee table. He selects a purple piece of paper and begins to make small squares on it with a green oil pastel. As soon as he finishes drawing the squares, he asks me to sit next to him. He says, "I'm going to make a picture like the cartoon that they showed on the T.V. the other night." With a dark green oil pastel in his hand, Ian slowly and carefully begins to make a round shape in the first square of the first column (Plate IV.4.B). "This is a water lily pad," He explains what he is drawing without looking at me. Then he changes to a lighter green and continues drawing. "A frog is jumping from this lily pad. He has a big brown spot on his back, he looks like a turtle, he has pink eyes." In the second square of the same column, the lily pad and the frog are depicted, but the position of the frog is different. Its legs and body stretch farther in the air

to show the leaping movement. As Ian continues to draw the frog in the squares of the first column, its legs appears shorter and shorter. This is to show the movement.

When Ian reaches the first square of the second column, the lily pad is partially drawn near the dividing line and only the legs of the frog are seen . This to show that the frog is still in the leaping movement. Ian pauses to look at his drawing, he picks up a deep blue pastel and begins to fill in the water. As soon as he reaches the last picture of the leaping frog, Ian partial fills in the water, there is water only around the lily pad. I watch him with curiosity. At that moment something remarkable ha[illegible]ens, Ian changes to use a lighter blue. Thus when he finishes filling in the water, the[illegible]wo colors of blue, dark and light together. This is to show the movement and the [illegible]g position of the frog. "How interesting! This is wonderful, very nice," I admire his [illegible]and says, "I think so too. I enjoy doing it," he says as he continues to draw. The frog jumps closer and closer to the next lily pad, and finally it lands on it (the first and second picture of the third column). Then it starts to hop again to the next lily pad thus the same process of drawing is repeated.

Now something is changing again, in the last square of the fourth column Ian makes the frog approach the land. Once again in a remarkable way Ian depicts the connection between the water and land. Part of the bank is formed by using brown and green on top to show the grass. With a sky blue pastel Ian colors in the rushing water. He goes back to fill in the water in each square that he had left. Since there are so many of them, he asks me to help him color in the water. Ian makes a wavy line in each little block so that I can color them. Then Ian says, "You can help me draw the sun too." I ask him to show me where and how to draw it.

The frog continues to hop on the land, but this time he finds a big purple flower. In each frame, Ian depicts the gradual movement of the frog eating the beautiful petals. "Chap, chap, chap," Ian makes the sound of the frog chewing the flower. "I'll write, 'The End,' here in the last one."

In a lighthearted manner Ian writes the word, "End" backward. "Sometimes they write "The End" like this to make it funny," Ian remarks. Then he asks me to help fill in the green grass. When we finish we show the picture to the other children. We talk about the colors and the movement of the frog and all of us agree that it is a fascinating drawing. I thank him for letting me take part in his drawing. Ian gives me a big smile. Then he says, "Would you like to hear the story of this one?" I say, "Yes, please," And so Ian's story begins to unfold:

> A frog hopped off a lily pad. He got farther, and farther, and farther, and farther. And then he hopped to another one and then he decided that he wanted to hop again to another one. But then again this time he thought he's gonna hop on another one. But instead he hopped on the land. He said, "I don't mind, if I hop on the land as long as it's a good land." He found a flower and he ate one petal, [Ian speaks slowly with a deep voice.] And he ate two petals, and he ate three petals, and he ate four petals and all the petals are gone. And he said, "Boy, I'm stuffed!" That's the end.

Within its connectedness, Ian draws a jumping frog, using the hues, the lines and shapes to tell a story. Gradually, the story grows as each frame moves by. But the story Ian tells is not nearly as exciting as the ones that he draws. This drawing gives me different feelings.

There is a movement in each column inside the little squares that suggest a sequence. Notice the position of the lily pad, it is indeed artistically drawn. Sometimes the whole leaf is shown and in some squares the leaf is partially drawn since it is immersed in the water, then in some squares the position of the lily pad is partially tilted in the air and in some squares the whole leaf is floating in the water. Ian's drawing about a jumping frog is artistically done. Each column is like vibrant strands of thread, and Ian weaves them together to form an exquisite piece of brocade. "Thus we come to realize that colors vibrate against each other, which not only affects their relatedness but creates an ever-changing sense of space. What makes a painting 'alive' is that each time we look at it we may see these constantly changing relationships" (Dimonstein, 1974, p. 48).

As I step away from the drawing, it gives me a feeling of looking at an exquisite piece of stained glass. In its kaleidoscope of feelings, this visual narrative which is made of small units of artful stained glass, "paint" a story about a jumping frog. How beautiful, how stunning! Indeed to create a drawing in such way is rather intriguing. At this point, I am reminded of Picasso (1980a) who said, "Once I drew like Raphael, but it has taken me a whole lifetime to learn how to draw like children" (p. 141).

Amidst a sequencing-storying style, there is another kind of drawing that children sometimes compose. Let us now look at a beautiful visual narrative created by Ian. This time the story is linked and told in separate frames.

The children begin to draw after hearing the story, The King, The Cat, And The Fiddle. It was a humorous story about a poor king who loved music. The king had a talented cat who could play a fiddle very well. The book has totally captured the children's interest. The giggling, the laughing, and the commenting on the book continues as they draw. Fadwa likes the part where the kings' diamond falls off from his crown. Bader says the cat is very clever. Mizzy agrees with Bader. Ian, who is sitting at the other end of the table says, "I think I'll draw something about music." Gradually, frame by frame, Ian's drawing begins to emerge.

After he finishes drawing the first and second frame, he shows them to Bader. Bader looks at them and responds with interest and admiration. Fadwa and Mizzy put their crayons down for a while to look at Ian's drawing of Lydia and the Plant With The Strange Color (Plate IV. 5). Soon all of the children are deeply involved with Ian's drawing. They are very anxious to know what will happen in the next frame.

Suddenly the whole room becomes a single hush as Ian begins to draw the ninth frame. Ian announces that Lydia, the princess, has to die, "She'll be heart broken." This indeed brings sadness to the other three children (Mizzy, Fadwa, and Bader), they respond to Lydia's death at a very emotional level. What strikes me is the children's strong reaction, how they do not want Lydia to die. Bader sadly makes this comment. "You

Plate IV.5 "Lydia And The Plant With The Strange Color"

by

Ian

AND
THE
PANT
WITH
THE
STRIPED
COLOR

mean, she loves someone, and that person doesn't love her?" Instead of giving Bader an answer, Ian says, "You'll find out what happens." Mizzy is deeply concerned about Lydia's death. She begs Ian not of make Lydia die. Her voice is trembling when she asks, "Why does she have to die? Please don't make her die." Fadwa is also very sad to hear that Lydia has to die. She says, "Please don't let her die." Once more, all of them get up and gather around Ian begging him not to make her die. Ian abruptly gets up and he runs to the hall way to finish his drawing. When he comes back to where we are sitting, Ian says, "Are you ready for my story?" Frame by frame, the poignant story of Lydia And The Plant With The Strange Color begins to unfold:

> Once upon a time, there was king and queen who ruled the land called Music. Music was very popular down there, of course, and they were very good at dancing, especially break dancing. They would do waltzes and folk dances. They would do square dance and the other stuff. Everybody liked the king and the queen because of their lovely daughter, Lydia. Lydia was the beautifullest [sic] girl in the whole town. She had lovely black hair, and she always wears nice clothes. She also liked dancing.

When Ian reaches the second picture, he pauses to describe Lydia's beautiful room:

> My picture shows her bed, part of her rooms in one of her houses. On her bed is her Walkman with speakers. That's her radio and her ghetto blaster.

Ian turns to the third picture and the story continues:

> One day the king went out to the market shop. He went to get the music shoes, the musical shoes for his little girl, and he got musical cloth from a strange land. If you rub it on something it will make music and the guy was very nice, his name was La-Di-La. His Father was Fa-La-Di, and they went to the music school with the king. So he [the king] invited the boy over to his house and then the king ate lots of fruits with him. And he [the boy] had a little flower. The king asked him, "What's that for?" The man's son said, "It's for your daughter, your highness." And the daughter came down and turned on the stereo and started dancing for them. Then they went outside and he gave the gift to the princess and the king said, "Oh, but we have lots of plants, can't you see?" They putted [put] the plant right between a red plant and a tree plant that's very small and weird.
>
> Everyday the princess took water from the well because there was hardly any water. She took water from the well because there was hardly any water. She took water and the water kept on going lower and lower and lower. She was going to get the last drop, but the king said, "No!" She went to her room and started to cry on her bed. The next day she was dead on her giant chair.

Then I asked Ian, "Why did she die? He said, "heart broken." And Ian finally finishes the story:

> The king started crying on her. He [the king] didn't ever want to see the plant again, and he put it in the catapult and it went far, far, far, away. Then it smashed in Candyland, and she was born in Candyland where clouds would rain and water stayed for a while, and there were small suns. And so there was no such color of blue. And the princess' eyes were blue, and so he saw all the shattered things and he recognized--the guy from Candyland--recognized it, and he said that was the princess' and he found out that the color of the plant was blue and he remembered that he gave the plant to the princess, and the princess' eyes were blue.

Ian's visual narrative of Lydia And The Plant With The Strange Color seems to resonate with a great deal of rhythm and melody that emanates from the integrated wholeness. All elements in the story are beautifully woven together. It evolves around a musical motif thus the names and things in the story speak in a melodic flavor. Ian sets the stage by saying, "Once upon a time, there was a king and queen who ruled the land called Music." Right away Ian has the audience attention. As we move on, the story tells about a shop owner and his son at the market place. With very musical, yet well chosen names, they are called Fa-La-Di and La-Di-La. The names are so poetic and musical that it is almost like singing at the point of utterance. It appears that to Ian a word is as alive as a singing bird and a blooming flower. "Each word has its lustre, its sparkle, its subtle charm" (Tagore, 1962, p. 151), how intriguing and delightful! Then the story is punctuated by something that is rather stunning, a "musical chair" (a chair that has a shape of a musical note), musical shoes and musical cloth! He [the king] went to get musical shoes and the musical cloth from a strange land. If you rub the cloth on something it will make music. Could it be that a child's mind is a mind of the integrated wholeness? Does it mean that this child understands the connectedness and relatedness of things in life? This story leads me to believe so.

Ian's visual narrative of Lydia And The Plant With The Strange Color captures the audience's hearts. Each frame addresses a different mood and tone. Ian has beautifully woven together various feelings to express joy, happiness, love, caring, sadness, and

death and rebirth to form a life story. Perhaps each frame is like a note that emanates from a musician's flute, sometime high and sometimes low, flowing together composing an unforgettable song; Lydia And The Plant With The Strange Color.

The story of Lydia And The Plant With The Strange Color was powerful not only for the children, it was also powerful for me. Indeed, it was a moving experience. The gentle love of a father for his daughter was most clearly expressed. It was so beautiful that I wanted to share it with someone. And since I was so overwhelmed by the story that I was unable to transcribe it by myself, I collaborated with Idrenne Lim-Alparaque (1986) who also used this story in her doctoral dissertation.

What is fascinating about the theme sequencing-storying is that it indicates that children seem to know what a book is all about. It reveals to us children's concept of book-ness. Like a book, there is a beginning, a middle, and an end. Further to this, these kinds of visual narratives are cleverly done and well thought out, not in terms of being planned ahead of time, but in the sense that each section tell a piece of the story.

Composing a visual narrative in a sequencing-storying way is complex and alive, but it is a different kind of aliveness than that of telling-drawing. How? Gradually, the audience is moved into the details and the excitement of the story and frame by frame the story continues to grow. The drawing is not "static" like an ordinary painting. Rather the viewer sees a train of events and activities sequenced in the story drawing.

Metaphorically speaking, this is like a train, a train of action perhaps. The different cars on the train are linked and connected. In sequencing-storying each frame is also connected. Each frame is filled with breathtaking moods, color tone, action characters, mystery, and symbols. There is a frame that expresses happiness, sadness, love, and caring.

In sequencing-storying, the visual narrative flows like a river full of sudden turns and surprises.

> The real river is zig zag, sometimes going to the south and sometimes moving to the north. . . .The river goes zigzag, takes a long route, sometimes flows fast and sometimes goes very lazy. And there are different moods and different climates and different lands which it passes through. And it takes sudden turns. It goes in a dancing way: not confined, not like a slave, not like a prisoner, chained, following the policeman. It goes in freedom. Then each step has its own beauty (Rajneesh, 1981, p. 54).

There is one thing visibly held in children's visual narratives and that is the combination of reality and fantasy. Most of them draw on reality and fantasy to come up with stories and drawings. It appears that for young children, like Mizzy, the magic and the familiar are one. Lydia is very real to her so real that she does not know that it is fantasy. To Mizzy, Lydia's death is real, she begs Ian not to make her die. Fantasy is so powerful that it moves her. Although there is evidence that children weave their visual narrative from reality and fantasy; however, this study cannot say which children were able to separate fantasy from reality and which were not able to. This is not the point of this study. But the charm is their ability to integrate the fantasy and reality whether they know the difference between them or not. At some point children can separate fantasy and reality. For very young children, they experience fantasy and reality as one. It is a true wholeness. This is the inventive mind. It is the integrated whole which generates something new. When children create visual narratives, they weave and blend reality and fantasy together. Children use the total of their experiences of imagination to create visual narratives.

Creating Visual Haiku

There is another kind of visual narrative that children create. This type of visual narrative has simplistic pictures; while the drawing is simple the story can be complex.

Ian is huddling under the stairways in front of my apartment, he is busy painting. A piece of paper is taped in front on the cement. In the hall way next to Ian, the two girls (Mizzy and Fadwa) are also painting. There is a conversation, "Look at my burger." "Green and pink makes brown." "Can you draw a bear?" There is also an invitation,

"Come here, I'll show you my drawing." "I want to show you my rainbow, too." The children get up from where they are to take a look at their friends' drawings. And they carry on admiring each other's work. "I like your rainbow," Ian admires Fadwa's drawing. "The bird looks real nice," Fadwa praises Mizzy's painting. "Your burger looks nice too," the two girls enjoy Ian's painting.

As soon as Ian finishes painting his second picture, he asks me, "Did you watch T.V. last night?" "Which T.V. program?" I ask. Ian says, "Three's Company." So I tell Ian that, "No, I don't watch T.V. that much. Why do you ask?" "I'm drawing something like that?"

Ian explains to me where he gets the ideas for his drawing. In the meantime I walk up to Ian to take a closer look at his picture. Ian begins to tell me more about his paintings. "I have just finished drawing about a burger and his friends. These are his friends, French Fries, Round Face, Claws, and Skim." In the second picture, Ian draws a bear with a smiling face. The head of the bear is drawn so large that it almost fills the whole page. His name, Ted E. Bear, is written above him. On the left side of the bear is a dollar sign, and on the right is a heart sign. At the bottom of the page Ian draws a bird, a porcupine, and a snake (Plate IV.6.A.B). While Ian tells me about his pictures, the two girls join us an then the adventurous story of "Blue Burger" begins to unfold:

The Blue Burger

It is about a Blue Burger in a restaurant. He has lots of friends, and one of them is named Skim, and the other one's fork-- his name is Claws. And there's a plate, and his name is Round Face, and he has another friend, his name is French Fries.

What happens to Blue Burger is that he is sitting on Round face, and Round Face starts singing:

Woh, woh. Here she comes.
Watch out boy!
She'll chew you up.
She's a man eater.

So Blue Burger jumped off the plate and ran into the kitchen. He saw Skim, the spoon, and Claws, the fork. Claws did not like Blue Burger

Plate IV.6.A.B "The Blue Burger"

by

Ian

Plate IV.6.C

Fadwa's visual narrative of a little boy making a snow man

A

B

C

very much and started scratching Blue Burger. Blue Burger went off through the "EMPLOYEE ONLY" door.

Ian stops for a while to think and begins to talk about the other friend of Blue Burger's:

French Fries has a good sense of humor and is very funny. (Blue Burger and French Fries went to cooking school together, and that was the first time they saw each other in five years.)

As Ian turns to the next picture, he pauses to think about the story and then he continues:

> Blue Burger and French Fries went to the forest. They found a bear, his name is Ted E. Bear. Ted E. Bear has friends that are: a bird his name is Fat So. One of them is a porcupine or hedgehog. His name is Prickly. Another one is a snake, his name is Slimie. Slimie and Prickly had a fight, and Prickly threw a prickly ball at Slimie. Slimie hissed at Prickly, and started rattling his tail. When Slimie saw Blue Burger and French Fries, French Fries and Blue Burger ran away, and they went back to the restaurant. They started to talk to Round Face. Round Face said, "Look out somebody is going to eat you!" French Fries, and Blue Burger didn't actually believe him. Someone started to pull French Fries' beautiful hair, and started to eat him. So they got eaten up. That's the end of the story.

Ian creates the paintings to tell a story, an exciting story indeed. Once again the inspiration comes into play. Evoked by a T.V. program, Ian's Blue Burger comes into life. Ian depicts this visual narrative in a sequential style; however, these two pictures are both depicted in a very simple manner. But how could simple paintings generate such a remarkable story? What makes them to be so powerful? As I probe deeper and carefully look at it, there is something in Ian's Blue Burger that reminds me of a Japanese haiku, its simplicity perhaps. What is a haiku, and what is its beauty? A haiku or a hokku is a poem that expresses the beauty of ordinary things in life. In other words, this kind of poem echoes the beauty of simplicity. The stars, the moon, the wind, flowers, frogs, crickets--these are the things of which they sing. "In few words of primitive, child-like simplicity these old sages sang, for the little hokku poems are gems of only three lines comprising no more than seventeen syllables, the tiniest poems in the world" (Hearn, et al. 1925). Haikus

usher one into an atmosphere of tenderness and simplicity. For example, this lovely haiku that sings from Buson's inner feelings (Lewis, 1964):

The peony;

A silver cat;

A golden butterfly.

Many of us may wonder what is so remarkable about a simple portrait of a flower, a cat, and a butterfly. Lewis (1964) gives us a fuller appreciation of the beauty of this rare gem. He writes:

> But if you fill in the blood-red color of the peony, the silver color of the cat and the golden color of the butterfly, place all of them in a garden near a stream or in a forest, and perhaps imagine the golden butterfly motionless on the tip of the peony and the silver cat staring sadly at the butterfly, you have a wonderful picture which can change any time you like (p. XVII).

In a sense with this kind of poem, there is a space, the space that invites a reader to walk in. There is freedom because there is so much left unsaid for the reader to freely fill in with his or her own imagination. In a way, there is an openness which allows the reader to take part, to become "co-creator" (Hunsburger, 1983, p. 68). The lines in haiku are quite sufficient for the poet and the reader. Hence, the reader does not merely conform, or receive.

> To be artful is to invite others to participate in the creative act. And the important part of that invitation is knowing when to stop. Otherwise things are too full; there is no space to walk in (Hunsburger, 1983, p. 67).

Then Lewis (1964) further elaborates that these haiku poems are like those fine sketches of the East "which you, the reader, have to fill in with color. Sometimes you are given the main characters in a scene and then you have to fill in the action" (p. XVII).

Similarly, what Ian has painted in the two pictures of The Blue Burger appears to be nothing more than the portrait of the characters in his story. In the first picture, Ian paints a hamburger (Blue Burger), french fries (French Fries), a plate (Round face), a fork (Claws), and a spoon (Skim). These are the main characters of the first episode. Then in the second one, the characters of the second episode are depicted: a bear (Ted E. Bear), a

bird (Fat So), a porcupine (Prickly), and a snake (Slimie). These images are the essential features of the story. Perhaps it could be stated that the painting of The Blue Burger is a series of word pictures that inspires an evocative mood similar to that of Japanese haikus.

Although Ian's paintings of The Blue Burger are simple, to Ian they are not senseless or without feelings. These images are embedded in fantasy. They are not merely just lines, forms, or shades of hues, but they are the work of art that comes from the heart. Perhaps this is similar to what Sengai has expressed:

> Every stroke of my brush
>
> Is the overflow
>
> Of my inmost heart (Franck, 1973, p. 129).

But how could these paintings generate such a remarkable story? What makes them so powerful? Perhaps it is the simplicity together with the openness that allows freedom for Ian to create a story or even to change it. Ian's painting of Blue Burger appears to be simple. It looks empty. If we, for example, consider a cup. "The cup is not only the shape, the colour, the design but also that emptiness inside the cup. The cup is the emptiness held within a form; without that emptiness there would be no cup nor form" (Krishnamurti, 1984, p. 53). In a sense, it may be then the "emptiness" held within Ian's drawings that allows a remarkable story of Blue Burger to take form.

Lowenfeld (1970) asserts that to young children drawing is their language. They use drawing primarily as a means of expression. Perhaps the painting of Blue Burger represents the language that children use to express feelings just as a haiku poet uses language, like color and line, to paint the enchanting images of a moment. In other words, these simple drawings by children are poems, or a form of visual haiku. However, it appears that visual haiku in this case involves sequencing. There is a sequence, and yet inside, the sequence is composed of visual haikus

A haiku is truly a picture poem. When a poet composes a haiku it is a transformation of images into words, it is a continuation. Allow me to use this classic

haiku as an example. It is composed by one of the most renowned Japanese poets, Basho (Suzuki,1959, p. 227):

The old pond, ah!

A frog jumps in:

The water's sound !

Silently an ancient pond is sketched. It is dark and deep. Green grass is growing around it. Its delicate blades are gently swaying along the warm summer wind. But at that moment the pond comes alive, a frog jumps in and creates a sound in the water. How simple this poem is, and yet powerful! To appreciate haikus, one needs to appreciate silence because haiku suggests a great deal of silence. If we read carefully, we may find that the haiku of an old pond by Basho indeed reflects silence. However, when I say silence I do not mean silence as opposed to the word "loud." It is a kind of silence within the speaking world. It is the silence that precedes the beginning. It is the silence of pausing and gathering one's thoughts. In telling a story, children also need silence, they pause in between to gather thought and ideas as shown while Ian was telling the story of Blue Burger. Spurling (1977) speaks of silence in the speaking world in this way:

> The movement from silence to speech is not a movement from nothing to something, from non-meaning to meaning. The silence that precedes and surrounds speech is not void, but a silence with a promise of speech, a silence pregnant with meaning, like a pause in a conversation, or a gap between each ring of the telephone. Speech is a progression to a linguistic meaning, from the more primitive field-structure of experience, which is itself already a primordial level of significance with a potential for more complex layers of meaning to be constructed on top of it" (p.51).

Visual haiku in one case involves sequencing, and in another case is a simple picture as shown in one of Fadwa's drawings.

It is a cold evening. The snow is falling rather heavily. The thick fluffy flakes fill the sky. Slowly and gracefully the snowflakes touch the ground and soon it is densely covered with the white snow, creating such a spectacular sight. Inside the house the children are drawing. Soon I begin to see a picture of a boy, a snowman, and the falling

snow on Fadwa's drawing (Plate IV.6.C). And when Fadwa finishes drawing, she invites all of us to listen to her enchanting story:

> Once there was a little boy and the season was winter. The boy decided make a snow man. There were big snowflakes. The sky was blue.
>
> One day he said, "I'd rather make a snowman in my house." The snow was almost gone, so he took some snow, he put the snow in the freezer so the snow wouldn't melt. His mother and father were at camp. They told him they would come next month. So his mother and father didn't know there is snow in the house. So he always put water in the freezer until the snow got bigger, and bigger, and bigger, and bigger until his house was filled with snow.
>
> The day the snow filled his house, his mother and father were home. The mother said, "Ah! what in the world is that?" So the boy didn't even say a pepe [peep]. (It means a word). The boy was kind of sad. His mother said, "It's okay." And clean the house and lived happily ever after.
>
> By the famous story teller, Fadwa. The end. [This is how Fadwa wrapped up her story.]

As I carefully look at Fadwa's drawing, it appears that it expresses a great deal of silence. Perhaps it is the gentleness of the falling snow outside and the evening that creates the quiet mood. We may not need much to express the beauty in life, perhaps only a simple picture of the falling snow, a little boy, and his snowman are already sufficient. Finish! In silence the images vibrate an enchanting story. This is how a haiku communicates. Just as a flower, it does not talk but:

> Silently a flower blooms,
> In silence it falls away;
> Yet here now, at this moment, at this place,
> the whole of the flower, the whole of
> the world is blooming.
> This is the talk of the flower, the truth
> of the blossom;
> The glory of eternal life is fully shining here (Shibayama, 1970, p. 205).

In Japanese flower arrangements (Ikebana) the philosophy is "emptiness" or "nothing-ness," therefore very few flowers are used. Here the poetry of flowers is communicated in silence as well. What makes this kind of flower arrangement appear to be strong is the ability to help the viewer to bring the flower and the "non-flower" together,

this is what Zen refers to as "no-thing." Perhaps we can say that there is the notion of "no-thing" in Ian's The Blue Burger, and in Fadwa's drawing about a little boy and the snow. In other words, these two children have artistically created the "drawing" and the "non-drawing" together.

As we look at children's visual haiku, we see that they depict a simple picture to tell a story. The simple picture becomes a framework, or an outlet for the story. We see that the main characters are depicted akin to that of the Japanese haiku. Metaphorically, in creating a visual haiku a child has become an Ikebana artist who creates a floral arrangement with space. This is perhaps its genuine beauty--rare, simple, and silent like a whisper of a cool breeze. Children seems to have an understanding of this kind of mystery.

Moreover, in creating visual haiku, children point out the beauty in ordinary things and usher us into the silent moment of tender everyday-ness. A hamburger, french fries, a fork, a spoon, a plate, a teddy bear, the falling snow, a snow man--these are the simple things in life. And if we use our eyes like children to look at the world with innocence and friendliness then we may find that this world evokes an endless beautiful poem.

An innocent, little boy, ah!
Making a snowman;
From the falling snow (Vorapassu, 1989).

An Appreciation of Visual Narratives/A Reflection On Simplicity And Silence

Thus far I have presented various aspects of the way children create visual narratives. But what is it like to look into their visual narratives? In what way should we accept and acknowledge this unique experience in childhood?

Children's visual narratives can be difficult for grown ups to understand and appreciate. When a child draws with layers of actions on top another action, or a weaving-

storying, we may hear the teacher say, "No, don't do that you'll ruin your picture." What is going on here? Aren't we imposing an adult point of view on our children? When children draw, their experience of drawing is quite different from ours. Children do not draw reality, they draw how they experience reality. What speaks to us here then is that their drawings are "concerned with their inward involvement with what they see rather than with outward appearances" (Tovey, 1972, p. 3). Great artists are always guided by their inner feelings, their creations always come from how they feel about things. Listen to this story about Van Gogh:

> Vincent van Gogh has painted his trees so high that they reach beyond the stars. Somebody asked him, "We have never seen such trees. What kind of trees are these and how can they go beyond the stars?
>
> Van Gogh is reported to have said that "It doesn't matter whether any tree succeeds or not. This is the desire of the tree that I have painted, this is the ambition of the tree, this is the very spirit, the longing of the tree. Every tree longs to go beyond the stars. I have seen it in the trees, I have listened to the trees, I have watched them. I understand their language and the message is clear and loud from every tree, from the smallest to the biggest, that they are trying to go beyond the stars. Whether they succeed or not is another matter. I am not concerned with that, I am concerned with the inner feeling of the tree" (Rajneesh, 1981, p. 114-115).

Similarly, to children, drawing is an expression of the inner feelings, not merely an imitation of the reality. It is an inward portraying. Children listen to their inner being.

Parents and teachers need to be sensitive to what children say and do. In other words, in trying to understand children's drawing we need to be in the moment with them. Being with children we can bring more life to their drawing. Being with children means that the adult needs to be sensitive to when to move in and when to wait. If the teachers are not "in the moment," they miss the beauty of the visual narrative. To be with the children in the moment, we can truly uncover the experience. What we have to relearn about children's drawing is to "be in the moment." Wilson and Wilson (1979) comment that children's visual narratives are valuable part of life that need to be nurtured. They assert that to appreciate children's visual narratives is very much like learning to appreciate a whippoorwill's song in the spring time.

> If you have never heard the sound of a whippoorwill, it is impossible to recognize its distinctive cry from the song of other birds. But once your ears are attuned to hear them, you hear whippoorwills all the time (p. 9).

Let us now go back to the meaning of silence and simplicity. What does the meaning of simplicity and silence mean to us? What do the meanings of silence and simplicity say to us in terms of teaching and learning in school?

Silence, especially, is very difficult for modernists to understand or even to appreciate. Our life is prone to be occupied by sounds, and language. In the Thai culture silence is considered to be an important part of our life. In the past, children had more opportunity to be acquainted with silence as they walked along the river bank, stood under a tree or sat on a big branch of the tree. But as the new way or so called "western way" of life penetrates the Thai way, the communion of silence seems to be drifting away and we are afraid of silence sometimes.

There is a story about a kindergarten teacher in Thailand who sees values of silence. Having seen the restlessness in children caused by the rushed modern way of life, this teacher thought that she should do something about it. Thus she integrated an exercise of silence into the story time. She asked her little students to relax and listen to a story in silence by closing their eyes. Initially, some of these kindergarten students were restless. They giggled, many could not sit still, and some of them opened their eyes to see what other children were doing. But with the teacher's kindness and patience, finally she was successful and all the children listened in peace. As soon as the story ended, she asked her children to do a simple form of a yoga; she had them imagine themselves as a cloud that freely and lightly floated in the sky, or as a wave that moves slowly in the ocean.

She wanted to know if the children had listened to the story, thus at the end of the period she asked questions about the story and randomly asked the students to tell a story. She found that the children were able to repeat the story. However, it was quite interesting that there was one child who deeply appreciated the beauty of silence. She was totally at peace. But one day the principal asked the teacher to see her about her inclusion of silence

in her teaching. A parent had come to complain that his daughter refused to join the family on their annual trip to the Disney Land in California. The child reasoned that she would rather play at home and be content. The father, who was a doctor, was furious because to him this is a sign of backwardness and nonprogressiveness. The parents threatened that if the teacher continued teaching in the same way, the child would be transferred to a new school where more "modern" strategies were used.

Silence has become a stranger in our life. Perhaps we have forgotten that all living things need silence. For example, trees need to rest in silence in the winter before they give new leaves new flowers in the spring time. In the same way, humans need silence which is like a pause a gap of a new beginning. We need silence to start within. Silence is complex, and yet simple.

Simplicity seems to be a part of the child's creation of visual narratives. Simplicity also suggests emptiness; however, it is a kind of emptiness that holds an invitation to walk in and to participate. But if we look into our "pre-sequenced" classrooms, what do we see? Perhaps we see that children are rushed and gorged with ideas and knowledge until there is no space left for there own thinking and exploring. Often time a well regulated classroom is too full and too complete. Each day is cluttered and filled like some of the flower arrangements that are commonly seen in the florist shops. These flower arrangements are so full and cluttered with flowers that you cannot put the "flower" and the "non-flower" together. In a sense, what we are talking about here is freedom, the kind of freedom that will allow our children to bloom and to grow in their own way. Krishnamurti (1974) alludes to a kind of freedom when he states:

> This problem of freedom and order is one of the most difficult and urgent problems in life. It is a very complex problem. It needs to be thought over more than mathematics, geography or history. . . . If the birds is not free, it cannot fly. If the seed is not free to blossom, to push out of the earth, it cannot live. Everything must have freedom, including man. . . . Birds, rivers, trees, all demand freedom and man must demand it too, not in half measures, but completely (p. 39).

Perhaps we need to take the importance of emptiness and silence into account. We need to have the kind of teaching that enables children to put together the "teaching" and the "non-teaching." Perhaps the suppression of beauty in childhood as express in the following poem may not occur:

He always
He always wanted to explain things, but no one cared.
So he drew.

Sometimes he would just draw and it wasn't anything.
He wanted to carve it in stone or write it on the sky, and it would be only him and the sky and the things inside him that needed saying.

And it was after that that he drew the picture.

And it was a beautiful picture.
He kept it under his pillow, and would let no one see it.
And he would look at it every night and think about it.
And when it was dark, and his eyes were closed, he could see it still
And it was all of him. And he loved it.

When he started school he brought it with him.
Not to show anyone, but just to have it, like a friend.

It was funny about school.
He sat in a square brown desk like all the other square brown desks and he thought it should be red.

And his room was a square brown room. Like all the other rooms.
And it was tight and close. And stiff.

He hated to hold the pencil and chalk, with his arm stiff, an his feet flat on the floor, stiff, with the teacher watching and watching.

The teacher came and spoke to him.
She told him to wear a tie like all the other boys.
He said he didn't like them and she said it didn't matter.

After that they drew. And he drew all yellow and it was the way he felt about morning. And it was beautiful.

The teacher came and smiled at him. "What's this?" she said.
Why don't you draw something like Ken's drawing?
"Isn't that beautiful?"

After that his mother bought him a tie and he always drew airplanes and rocketships like every one else.

And he threw the old picture away.

And when he lay out alone looking at the sky it was big and blue and all of
everything,
He wasn't anymore.

He was square and brown inside and his hands were stiff,
And he was like everyone else. All the things inside him that needed saying didn't
need it any more.

He had stopped pushing. It was crushed.

Stiff. Like every thing else.

(Anonymous)

Chapter V

RENDERINGS

What is it like for a child to compose visual narratives? How does a child's visual narrative take shape in the renderings? What does an experience of creating visual narratives demonstrate to us about childhood? Various themes in this chapter (experiencing time and space, asking in the telling, knowing by becoming, being in the moment, and mythifying reality) address the textuality of renderings.

Experiencing Time And Space

It is a Sunday evening. Ian accompanies his mother to the library at the university. After they have finished renewing her books, they come to my apartment for a visit.

While the grown ups are visiting and catching up with news and gossip, I notice that Ian quietly goes to the corner where I normally keep the clay dough and the drawing materials. From lumps of clay dough, different shapes of animals begin to come into being. "This one is a llama, a snake, a bat, and a dog," Ian proudly shows me the animals. That afternoon Ian's parents had taken a family guest to visit the Provincial Museum, and these animals were the animals that he had seen.

Ian carefully places the four animals on a piece of cardboard. He goes back to the corner where I keep the drawing materials to get a piece of paper and some oil pastels. He then begins to draw. Slowly and carefully, lines and shapes and colors appear (Plate V.1.A.B).

There is a range of mountains with high peaks. The mountains are so high that there is snow on top of them. Patches of clouds are lingering above. Down in the green meadow live four animals: a dog, a snake, a llama, and a bat. In a way, these animals had become an outlet for his drawing. It was indeed intriguing watching how Ian derived ideas for drawing. At our next drawing session, Ian asks me if I have the drawing that he had

Plate V.1.A.B "How The World Got Its Colors"

by

Ian

B

created at my apartment on the previous Sunday. I hand him the picture, and he begins to add a colorful rainbow between the two clouds, rain clouds, and lighting. Ian has completed his drawing and he cheerfully begins to unfold his story:

How the World Got Its Colors

> Once upon a time, there was nothing in the sky but a rainbow and a few clouds and everything was dull and grey and white. Only the rainbow shows the colors so does the sun, but very little color.
>
> One day the bat called a group of his friends; a dog, the snake, and the llama and said, "We should do something about the colors of our land." So the bat wrang [sic] the snake on his legs, and the snake tied his skin around the dog, the dog held on to the the llama. So they all went up to the sky to see the master of the sky. The master of the sky was a very cheerful man. He said, "Go and walk on the rainbow, then you shall see what to do." So all of them walked in the rainbow. The bat, he flew right into a stormy cloud and then the lighting came out and scared the llama, so he jumped in the cloud. And so the snake fell into green and so the whole sky was full of blur of colors, and then the four animals dropped down. One was white, one was green, one was black. The animals: llama, dog, bat , snake all looked around, they had made colors. They were colored too, the llama was white, the snake was green, the dog was brown, and the bat was black. And the other animals were colored too. Even the nature was colored. That's how the colors were made on people and animals.

The process of how this picture came into life strikes me rather strongly. What does this picture tell us about childhood? What does it tell us about being a child? And more importantly, what does this phenomenon speak to us about teaching young children? Is this phenomenon perhaps pointing to us of how a young child experiences time and space? Moreover, does it tell us that a young child needs openness and freedom to work? What is it like then when we give children the openness and freedom to work according to their body clocks? Perhaps the following story will provide some insights into the meanings of openness:

> A long time ago the world including the animals had very little color. So one day a crow and a peacock decided to do something about it. They agreed to take turns painting each other. Since the peacock was bigger and had more feather, the crow said that he would like to start. The crow carefully selected the colors: green, gold, and blue. Of course, the crow could not finish painting the peacock within one day. It took him many days and he was very patient. The two animals met again and again, finally the job was done and the design on the peacock looked so elaborate and exquisite that the peacock could not help dancing around showing off his beauty. All the animals nearby admired the crow's artful work. Now it

> was the crow's turn to have his feathers painted and decorated. As the peacock started to select the colors and carefully put some designs on his feathers. At that moment the crow smelled something, something that made his mouth water. There was a dead dog floating along the river! He felt hungry. He rushed the peacock to finish painting. The crow was afraid that he would miss his delicious meal so he rushed the peacock again. He could no longer wait, and finally he told the peacock to take the bottle of the black ink and pour it over his whole body. Within a flash of light the crow was all black and he flew off to have his meal (Part of the Thai oral tradition).

The story seems to suggest the importance of openness, freedom, non-pressure, and time in creating a work of art. All of these things are very important to children.

Let us now go back to Ian's visual narrative of How the World Got Its Colors. How did the visual narrative come about? It is quite clear that Ian's visual narrative is based on his trip to the museum and his play making. Creating a bat, a snake, a llama, and a dog, bringing his imagination to a concrete level. Thus both the trip to the museum and the playmaking are an outlet for Ian to compose his visual narrative. Could we say that children are naturally inspired? What is more intriguing is that Ian came back to add the rainbow, the rain clouds, and the lightning to his drawing. The way he created this visual narrative is fascinating. Ian treats his drawing as an ongoing process. This seems to suggest that children need not finish their work within one day. They need an openness of time so that they can come back. Michael Angelo did not finish his major creations in one day! Since there is no pressure for Ian to finish his drawing within a limited of time, he feels free to stop and come back to his visual narrative whenever he is ready or to discard it. For Ian, the whole process is lucid and relaxed, it is fun, it is play.

Why does Ian have these feelings? Perhaps it is because of the trust and rapport that developed between us. He knows that I am his friend, a grown up who adores children's drawings. He knows that I do not criticize and grade his work of art. He knows that I always appreciate and humbly accept whatever the children create. This is perhaps why the freedom arise in creating a visual narrative, there is no pressure. Beekman (1983) says that to understand a child's view of things it is necessary to have a close, intimate rapport with children. He further states:

> Only in this way can we learn to appreciate some of the fundamental differences in lifeworld structures of young children and adults, precisely because children's worlds are largely pre-conventional. As long as we see the actions of little children through the models of our shared adult coventionality, we are not likely to see the world as children, in their own uniqueness, see it. Nor are we likely to see children, themselves, very clearly (p. 40).

But what about creating visual narratives in a classroom? Quite often drawing is merely done in a limited, scheduled time. We may hear the teacher say: "It is now 10:00 o'clock, we are going to have drawing. We will stop at 10:45, and hand in your drawing at the end of the day or at 10:45." Are we treating children as a machine? Are we saying that once the button is pushed the drawing will come out instantly?

Drawing in school is integrated with other subjects or is done during the art period. Most of the time the "art lesson" is scheduled on Friday afternoons because many people believe that:

> Children, on Friday afternoons in school, are restless and have difficulty concentrating, teachers say, thus, reading, mathematics, spelling, social studies. . . are not good choices. During art period, children are less restricted they have greater freedom to move their bodies and are allowed to "whisper" or even to talk quietly to each other (Reimche, 1984, p. 2).

Are we using drawing as a time filler? Do we believe that drawing is less important and does not need a fresh mind? A Japanese calligraphy artist prefers to work in the morning when the mind is fresh. "Later in the day, the mind becomes cluttered with all that was done and all that must be done, all the things that distract one's thoughts" (Reimche, 1984, P. 2).

Thus when we ask children to draw, we need to nurture the activity rather than rush it. Moreover, children need the openness, flexibility, and time to come back to their work. Children need time for a piece of art to develop. An experience changes with time, it has to bloom with the "flow" of the body clock. Children need an "unfolding" time in order to express their inner feelings.

What happens when children are granted more time and space to work? Barr(1988), in an interview with a seven year old girl, discovers a rather interesting

account of her writing at home compared with the writing that she does at school. The girl makes it quite clear that there is a great difference between her work at home and at school:

M.B.: When you are at home do you write stories as well?

A.: Yes, lots of stories.

M.B.: Are they like these stories or are they different?

A.: They're different, much different. 'Cos I have to rush these 'cos to get in, on to the next book we have to do like today I'll probably have to rush my number to go on to my spellings.

M.B.: I see. What a shame you have to rush. So what are the ones at home like, why are they different?

A.: Because I don't rush. And I made it a little bit more longer 'cos I got huge pieces of paper about I should say that big half of this table.

M.B.: Oh, I see.

A.: It's about up to these really.

M.B.: Yes. Oh, and you like having a nice big space to work on?

A.: Yes. . . (p. 57).

What is this description saying then? Is it pointing out that children work more efficiently when they are given more space and time? While working at home this child breaks free from time constraints which otherwise limit her perspective and imagination. Van Manen (1986) suggests that, "The child needs that openness to make something of himself or herself" (p. 30). In such openness children have the freedom to add, alter, probe, and pursue into the threads of their imagination; hence this leads to a wider channel of possibilities. Perhaps in the classroom we need to provide an openness of time and space.

Asking In The Telling

"Asking in the telling" is an expression used by Lim-Alparaque (1986) when she discusses the meaning of children's storying experiences. Asking in the telling is the way in which children try to make sense of the world and things around them. When a child

tells a story, it could mean that she or he is asking a question, a question that comes in the form of story. When a child creates a visual narrative, their story drawing becomes a question rather than a telling.

Ian watched a movie called Bambie, and was deeply impressed by it. The movie has been lingering in his memory for the whole week. When Ian comes to the drawing session the movie becomes his inspiration.

"Look at this drawing," says Ian as he shows his picture to the two girls (Mizzy and Fadwa) who are drawing next to him. "This is Big Bird up here, and down here I have Little Mouse, Little Bird, and Little Squirrel," Ian continues. "What are they doing?" Fadwa asks with interest. "They are dancing on the street," Ian answers.

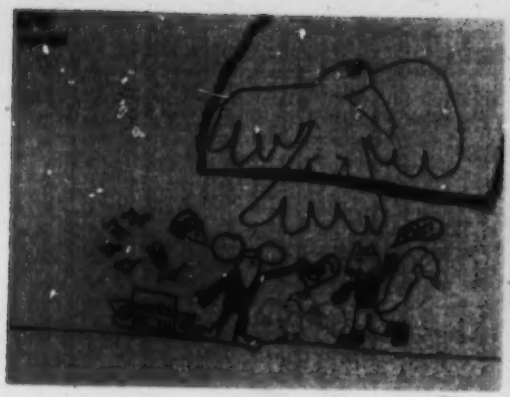
Having finished with the first pictures, Ian proceeds to create more colors, lines, forms, and rhythm on the paper. Gradually there are more and more pictures evolving around Little Mouse, Little Bird, and Little Squirrel. There is a story in these drawing as well (Plate V.2). And so Ian calls his story, Little Mouse:

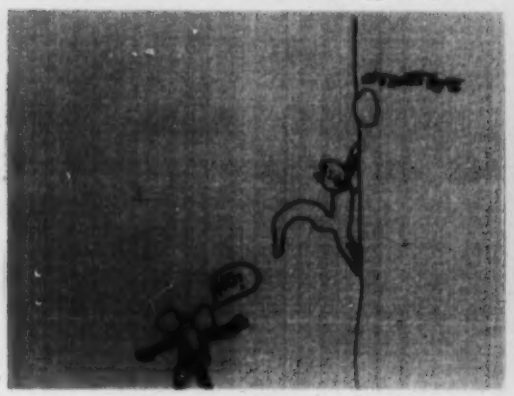
> Little Mouse has two friends, one was Little Bird, the other was Little Squirrel. One day, they were dancing on the street and Big Red Bird said, "Don't get into "Twitter Patter" stuff.
> "Okay," said Little Mouse.
> "Okay," said Little Bird.
> "Okay," said Little Squirrel.
>
> So Little Bird Flies off. "No Twitter patter," he thought. Then he saw a bunch of flowers hanging from something. And he thought behind it was a bird feeder. But it was a girl bird!
>
> The little Cupid hit him with a love arrow! "No, I'll never do that," said Little Squirrel while Little Bird flew to the girl bird's house.
>
> Behind the pile of leaves was a lady squirrel, she tied some string on a squirrel's favorite nut. It looked delicious. She put the string in the leaves in a special way, and she hid behind the leaves. "Yum," thought Little Squirrel. And then he followed the string, he saw the girl! They started climbing up the girl squirrel's house.
> "No, I'll never do that," said Little Mouse.
>
> But then Little Mouse found out "twitter patter" was very useful. So he went home to "twitter patter" his mother and his family, and they like it very much. And that's the end of the story.

Plate V.2 "Little Mouse"

by

Ian





When I delve deeper into Little Mouse, it does not appear to be a plain story pertaining to the three animals: a mouse, a squirrel, and a bird. But rather it talks about falling in love. The message of falling in love shines through the whole story. Ian's visual narrative may be more of a "questioning" rather than a "telling." As a young child, Ian may not be able to fully grasp the nuances of meaning attached to the abstract concepts. In his innocent world, he experiences love, the love from his parents and family. However, there seems to be another kind of love that he does not fully understand, the kind of love that appears to be outside the domain of his knowledge and understanding. This perhaps leads him to question it. In a child like and yet symbolic way, Ian uses the expression, "twitter patter stuff" to symbolize falling in love, a concept that is quite hazy and unclear to him. Ian's visual narrative may be his way of probing into something he does not quite comprehend. It is as if he wants to know what it is like to be in love. The questioning of the world and things seems to be natural for a young child. As Donaldson (1978) writes:

> First, he [the child] actively tries to make sense of the world from a very early point in his life: he asks questions, he wants to know. . . also from a very early stage, the child has purpose and intentions: he wants to do. These questionings and these striving imply some primitive sense of possibility which reaches beyond a realization of how things are to a realization of how they might be (p. 87).

For young children, abstract concepts are too complex for them to absorb or integrate. Further, when children ask questions about things, it could mean that they the need to check out their new experiences.

Knowing By Becoming

> There was a child went forth every day,
> And that object he looked upon, that object he became,
> And that object became part of him for the day or a certain part of the day,
> Or for many years or stretching cycles of years.
> The early lilacs became part of this child,
> And grass and white and red morning glories, and white and red clover, and the song of phoebe-bird,
> And the third-month lambs and the sow's pink-faint litter, and the mare's foal and the cow's calf (Whitman, 1977, p. 31).

This poem seems to suggest the notion of "knowing by becoming," the kind of knowing that is available to young children. The notion of knowing by becoming suggests that in order for children to know, they have to become that thing. For example, we may see a young child under the table pretending to be a frog, or a child pretending to be a bunny hopping around the room. To grown ups it may be only "pretend," but for children it is "real." The child is a frog or a bunny. Elkind (1981) refers to the knowing by becoming as the imbibing process. He explains that it is a process in which "the child absorbs the surrounding world and takes it into himself or herself" (p. 23). When children create a visual narrative they portray the sense of knowing by becoming as is shown in one of Ian's visual narrative.

Ian and Bader are busy drawing. Bader is drawing about a rocketship and Ian is looking for an idea to draw. Bader shows Ian his drawing and tells him about the rocketship. Suddenly Bader's drawing sparks an idea for Ian. He announces that his drawing is going to be about a space ship called Star Luck.

However, what is exceptional is not so much what Ian draws, but the process involved in drawing Star Luck. Star Luck is a little boy who lives on Planet X. He is the son of an alien mother and an earthly man. Star Luck is strong and powerful. He can transform himself into different sizes by saying these magic words, "Pip-Pap-Pop."

In the middle of his drawing, Ian abruptly stops and stands up. He puts both hands at the level of his chest and says, "Pip," the first portion of the spell. Simultaneously Ian's hands move apart suggesting that Star Luck is transforming into a bigger size. Then Ian's hands move further apart when he says, "Pap." Finally when he reaches the word, "Pop," he jumps and his hands are completely apart.

One hand is above his head and the other is low at his side. Ian repeats this act three of four times, oblivious of the other children. Curiously I look at Ian, but at that moment I cannot understand what he is doing. Later on Ian explains that he was pretending to be Star Luck and was trying out his magic spell.

Is this a way in which young children acquire a better understanding of the characters and the objects that they draw? This example is similar to Barrs' (1984) experience with young children. She notes that:

> The young writers that I interviewed often expressed a strong sense of inhabiting the worlds they were creating. They seemed to live their own stories and to be aware of them from the inside (p. 81).

Barrs (1984) further explains children's sense of living their own stories by using an account given by a eight-year-old boy: "It is just as if I was one of those persons, I'd be there. Like I'm imagining myself in a dream being there" (p. 82). This account is similar to Ian pretending to be Star Luck in that when a child needs to understand something, he/she must live in the experience. When Ian becomes Star Luck this process allows him to better understand the character that he is drawing. Ian then really knows what it is like to be someone who is powerful and strong.

The following story provides a good the notion of "knowing by becoming."

Early in winter 1988 three California Gray whales were found trapped by the ice off Alaska's bleak north coast. Many people came from all over the world with different kinds of advanced ideas and technology to help the whales. But no matter how hard they tried, they were not successful. Finally the hero who helped the whales was one of the Inuits who simply imagined himself as a whale, and how a whale would think. He knew whales could dive as deep as 300 feet for 4-6 minutes. Perhaps by making a channel from the whales to the ocean, would allow the whales to see their way to the ocean. A channel was made. With a sigh of relief the whales were saved.

When the Inuit imagined himself as a whale, he became a whale. This is knowing by becoming. We could say that to know animals this way is childlike. Children observe plants and animals closely and delight in them. Moreover, they feel that animals are not much different from themselves (Lark-Horovitz, 1976).

> To the child, there is no clear line separating objects from living things; and whatever has life has life very much like our own. If we do not understand

> what rocks and trees and animals have to tell us, the reason is that we are not sufficiently attuned to them (Bettelheim, 1977, p. 46).

Thus this concept of knowing by becoming is a kind of thinking that is not peculiar to young children. It is a way of viewing the world held by people who live close to the land and to nature, the people who have time to learn from nature and live in harmony with it. This kind of thinking and understanding is developed through long observation. Knowing by becoming is an attitude of "seeing," "feeling," and "being."

What is it like for a child to come to know and understand the world? What is it like for a child to experience knowing by becoming? How does a child reveal to us the notion of knowing by becoming while creating visual narrative? Reimche (1984) describes that moment in this way:

> To watch a child deeply engrossed in her drawing, we observe the sounds and motions she unwittingly makes as she draws. The child makes the sounds of animals "talking," of engines roaring, of space invaders attacking. She jumps and squirms in the action that absorbs her (p. 2).

Such an experience is similar to Bader's behavior as he creates one of his visual narratives.

Bader is engrossed in drawing a visual narrative called The Chipmunks Who Made A Mess. Bader draws a group of chipmunks who get drunk from drinking beer (Plate IV.1.B). Initially, Bader draws the table, the chairs, and the environment at a rather slow pace. When he reaches the part where the chipmunks get drunk, the drawing pace becomes very rapid. Bader enters the action of being drunk and moves his felt pen, arm, head and whole body rapidly to stimulate the throwing and breaking of a jug and glasses. Soon his speech is echoing around room: "I'm drunk. Crash! Bang! Okay, I'm going to dive. Splash!"

Observing Bader creating this drawing, is like attending a drama, a "one man" drama. I hear the sound effect as Bader skillfully becomes part of his story. Each character has an exciting role and personality. This word "personality" is a beautiful word. It comes from a Greek root word "persona." Etymologically, the word "sona" means voice or sound, and the word "per" means through the mask. Thus the word "persona" means a

voice through the mask. The Greek actors used to wear masks (Rajneesh, 1978). But Bader is so artistic that he does not need to wear a mask to suggest the character; he becomes the character.

Hence the drawings by both Bader and Ian illustrate how young children "live" stories; they experience a "knowing by becoming." Moreover, this is the kind of knowing that begins from the inside. In a sense, to know something well is to know it from the inside, to know it from the very "heart" of things; to be at the core of its existence. Children seem to possess this ability. A child's way of knowing by becoming then is perhaps "to enter right into the object and see it, as it were, from the inside" (Suzuki, 1970, p. 48).

> To know the flower is to become the flower, to be the flower, to bloom as the flower, and to enjoy the sunlight as well as the rainfall. When this is done, the flower speaks to me and I know all its secrets, all its joys, all its sufferings; that is all its life vibrating within itself (Suzuki, 1970, p. 85).

Perhaps what Suzuki is saying is that there is no boundary separating the observer from the flower. The observer and the flower become a subjective pool, they merge and become one. Similarly, when Ian becomes Star Luck, there is no boundary to divide him from Star Luck, they are connected. The child touches a deeper sense of knowing by becoming. When we see a child pretend to be a butterfly, the child is a butterfly. There is no boundary between the child and the butterfly. The child is living the experience of a butterfly.

> For a child to want to become a butterfly while dancing is not simply a fantasy of childhood. It is childhood finding what part of the butterfly still remains dancing in childhood (Lewis, 1979, p. 21).

The notion of knowing by becoming may facilitate a child to derive an idea for a better way of drawing.

Ian seems to have difficulty in drawing the picture about Lydia and the Plant With the Strange Color (Plate IV.5). This is a picture of Lydia dancing to her audience (the king, his father, and La-Di-La). Ian has finished drawing Lydia's beautiful face and black

hair but he is not quite sure about the dance posture, so he stands up and pretends to be Lydia dancing. "This should be the way she lifts her hands and her leg," Ian whispers to himself. Then he turns to Bader and says, "Look! Bader I should draw Lydia like this." Ian begins to show Lydia's dancing gesture to Bader. They both laugh. Ian finally derives an idea for Lydia's dancing posture. Isn't this also a way of knowing by becoming? Ian imagines that he is Lydia. As Lydia, he dances around so that he can truly know what to create on the paper.

In the East, the notion of knowing by becoming has long been used in creating a work of art and learning how to be come an artist. It is said that, "The painter Fan Kuan spent months wandering through snow observing mountains in order to paint the very bones of the mountains (Lewis, 1981, p. 8).

Similarly, it is said that to be able to paint a remarkable picture of a bamboo, one needs to become the bamboo, to know the very bones of the bamboo.

> A man came to great painter and asked him, "I want to paint bamboos. What should I do?"
>
> The master said, "First you go into the jungle and live with the bamboos for three years. When you start feeling that you have become a bamboo, come back."
>
> The man never return; three years passed. The Master waited and waited and he had to go in search of the man to see what had happened--because when you have become a bamboo, how can you come back to the Master?
>
> When the Master arrived he saw the man standing in a bamboo grove. The wind was blowing, the bamboos were swaying and dancing, and the man was swaying and dancing.
>
> The master shook him. He said, "What are you doing? When are you going to paint?"
>
> He said, "Forget all about it. Get lost! Don't disturb me."
>
> The Master had to drag him back home. He said, "Now you are ready to paint the bamboo, because now you know from the *inside* what a bamboo is" (Rajneesh, 1981, p. 209-210).

Knowing by becoming is to know from the "inside" as described by Rajneesh. It is the kind of knowing that one needs to "enter" into the "core" of that which one wants to understand. In other words, "participation observation" is a thread which joins our being and our understanding of things around us.

What does this notion of knowing by becoming reveal to us? Perhaps learning by doing? We know that young children learn through their lived experiencing. In the notion of knowing by becoming, children become in order to know. In knowing by becoming, children live that experience. They actually live it in the thinking, in the feeling, and in the being. In a sense, when we talk about lived experiencing we live it, we go through the experience and do not simply look at it. This is also how children learn, they learn by becoming.

Being in the Moment

> When Nansen was working in the field cutting grass with his monks, a travelling monk asked him, "Where is the road to the Nansen Monastery?" The traveller of course did not know that the man he so asked was the master himself of the Nansen. The latter then nonchalantly held out the sickle he was using and said, "I paid 30 pieces of money for this!" as if he did not hear the question the traveller wished to have answered. . . ."I am not asking about the cost of your instrument. What I want is the road leading to the Nansen." The Master again apparently ignoring the question, at least in its literal sense, said, "It cuts very well" (Suzuki, 1970, pp. 10-11).

The story may appear to be absurd and peculiar to a logical mind. But what is the message in the story? What is it telling? When Nansen was asked about the path to the monastery, his answer was, "I paid 30 piece of money for this." What he is pointing to the young monk is that this is the true living, cutting the grass, the task in hand. And when he was asked again, this time he answered, "It cuts well." He repeated the same thing, meaning that the true meaning of living is in the here-and-now not in the path to the monastery nor the master. The true meaning of life is to be in the moment.

What does a child do when composing visual narratives or telling a story through drawing? What happens? What impresses me about drawing is the enigmatic power of the fusion between the child and the task at hand. I have observed that a child's ability to live in the moment while drawing is quite phenomenal.

It is a fine afternoon. Mizzy is drawing in the livingroom of my apartment. She has to spend the whole afternoon with me while her mother is attending a meeting. She tells me that she would like to draw and that she has a lot of beautiful ideas.

I give her the drawing materials and some paper. Mizzy decides to draw on a piece of orange paper. I watch with interest as Mizzy reaches for a small pair of scissors and begins to cut the piece of paper into four equal squares. Then quietly she says to herself, "I'm going to draw a season like today." Gradually the pictures of seasons begins to emerge.

As Mizzy concentrates on drawing, the strokes of her crayon seems to blend with the rhythm of her narrative:

> The big bright sun is rising in the sky.
> Then I'll have blue clouds here.
> Then there is a big tree in the middle.
> The birds are flying above the tree.
> And down here, the flowers are blooming,
> and I'll make them red.

Mizzy is drawing a picture of summer time. With each stroke, she becomes more deeply engrossed in her drawing. She tilts her head slightly and her little body sways and moves gently with the drawing action. Mizzy is indeed totally immersed in her creation of the four seasons. Happily she draws the next season without a sign of boredom. As Mizzy is drawing, she is relaxed, she floats with the drawing, yet attentive, free and focused. She draws with her whole body, in total innocence, and total oneness. She is utterly relaxed, mindless. There is a great beauty.

Perhaps we could say that this an example of a fusion between a child and the task at hand. This is the art of being in the moment. The art of being in the moment is described in different ways. Drawing upon Schutz, Greene (1978) calls it, "wide-awakeness." To explain the meaning of wide-awakeness she quotes Schutz:

> By the term "wide-awakeness" we want to denote a plane of consciousness of highest tension originating in an attitude of full attention to life and its requirements. Only the performing and especially the working self is fully interested in life and, hence, wide-awake. It lives within its acts and its

> attention is exclusively directed to carrying its project into effect, to executing its plan. This attention is an active, not passive one. Passive attention is the opposite to full awareness (p. 163).

What Schutz is pointing out is that the true existence is revealed through a deepening awareness that exudes from a life of being fully awake in whatever one is doing. Further to this, Schutz's, concept of wide- awakeness suggests that "human beings define themselves by means of their projects and that wide-awakeness contributes to creation of the self" (Greene, 1978, p. 163).

Brandon (1976) refers the pure act of "being in the moment" as "nowness." To practice nowness does not mean that we have to exclude the past and future, "but an awareness of the subservience of both to the present moment" (p. 63). What is it like for a child to be in the nowness? Brandon describes that moment based on his own experience with children in this way:

> I was working as a voluntary helper in an Islington nursery. It was lunchtime and the children were having a cooked meal placed on their small tables. As the meal was served, the children began to sing spontaneously. Soon all the children, West Indian and English, were singing happily. The assistant in charge said kindly but firmly, "You can sing after lunch children but not now. All your dinners will get cold and uneatable." They ceased to sing.
>
> Half an hour later, the same assistant began to sing children's songs with the nursery group. She sang solo. The moment for the children had passed. Their attention had moved on to playing with bricks and dolls. She turned to me saying "Aren't children contrary? They never do what you want them to do." Uncharacteristically, I remained silent. Those small children, all under five, were thoroughly immersed in the here and now. They had wanted to sing when, to adults, it had seemed inconvenient. Half an hour later that desire had vanished completely (p. 69).

Children live in the moment, they are not result-oriented. Beekman (1983) says, "The child's world is less goal oriented, and there is a fuller presence in the experience of now" (p.43). Each moment has its own beauty, and the beauty is intrinsic. Each moment is an end in itself and is meaningful in itself. The art of being immersed in the here-and-now seems to be a natural state of being for children. Children neither live in the future nor in the past, they seem to dwell in the world of here-and-now. Yardley (1973) writes that:

> Small children haven't lived long enough to know what is meant by the past and future. The only time they know is now and untrammeled by reviewing past events of planning for the future, they can focus their entire attention on what immediately affects them (p. 92).

There is another occasion that I experienced the child being in the moment.

Bader is composing a drawing that tells a story about a baby vampire, (this refers to plate IV.3.B). A brown plane is drawn near the top of the page and a little vampire with sharp fangs appears at the bottom of the paper. Then the little vampire begins to shoot the plane. Soon I begin to hear the sound effects and see the fighting movement that is accompanying the drawing. "He [the baby vampire] is shooting him," Bader says. Then comes this sound, "Tew...tew...tew..." as the gun begins to roar. At that moment the chair can no longer hold Bader. Unknowingly he slowly moves his body and his face so closer to the paper that his nose almost touches it. He draws with his whole body, his face is filled with a kaleidoscope of feelings. There is a melting between the child and the drawing. Time stops. Bader is deeply engrossed in the drawing and seemingly oblivious to the other children as he draws, acts out the characters, and narrates at the same time. Sometimes his voice is loud and at other times it is soft.

While creating The Little Vampire, it seems that Bader lives in the nonmoments, periods of no time. As he is drawing, then he is not drawing any more, drawing is just happening: there is a flow, a sense of power and wholeness, his whole body and narrating move synchronization with thought and feelings, space expands, and there is openness without the sense of separation between the drawer and the drawing. Here the drawing and the drawer fuse together moving to a new space, a new world, the drawing world. Perhaps this is the here-and-now moment of drawing. Picasso (1980b) once said, "When you step into the picture, you leave (the world) behind you. You live in the world--the reality, space and time of picture" (p. 38). Picasso is, in a sense, speaking of being absorbed and being focused. Being in the moment is the absorption, it is the pure act of being in the moment; the moment when one devotes oneself totally to the here-and-now.

Perhaps it is like a moment when one is totally absorbed by the beauty of a painting. Madernfort (1976) explains that moment with these words:

> When we see the space of the painting as the space of time moving presently and continuously whole, we are seeing space moving presently while seeing space futuring and space passing past simultaneously. We are seeing blue space. We are seeing space blueing. We are seeing as we are being seen. We are seeing blue and blue is seeing us, and we are seeing blue blueing us. We are being and becoming blue. We are blueing. We are the blueing present, blueing presently, presently futuring blue presently blueing past (p. 12).

Absorbed in the painting the viewer and the painting is one. There is no line between the viewer and the painting. They fuse into one relaxing into each other's being. When one is totally absorbed there is no time. It becomes the timeless time.

What is it like for a child to be in the moment? What is it like for a child to be melding into the task at hand, to be totally engrossed in creating a visual narrative? We find an example of that moment in children's play also:

> Watch a child building a tower of blocks. Note his increasing anxiety as its equilibrium becomes more unstable, the sublime daring required in adding the last block. He is not thinking about himself, not conscious that he is there at all; his whole being is absorbed into the work in hand. It is not he that is building the blocks: the blocks are building him. The tower rules; the child is utterly subordinate; he hardly breathes until the thing is done. He is all builder; there is nothing over, not enough even to know that he is doing it (Lee, 1942, pp. 248).

In a way we may say that when a child laughs, he or she is in the laughter; when a child dances, he or she is in the dance; when he draws he is in the drawing. A child is not making the drawing, it is happening, the child is possessed by the drawing, moving and flowing with it in totality. The child lives in the moment totally free. In more precise words, Rajneesh (1978) states:

> He [the child] knows nothing. Without knowing, he is a no-mind--he simply exists moment to moment, he has no worries. When he feels hungry he cries, when he feels satisfied he falls sleep. When he is happy he smiles, when he is angry he screams. But he has no ideas about anything. He neither praises a smile nor condemns screaming. He neither feels shy about crying and weeping nor feels very good that he has been a good boy today. He knows nothing about all this nonsense. He knows nothing good, nothing bad, he makes no distinctions. He lives utterly one with

> reality. And whatsoever happens, happens; there is no rejection (p. 197-198).

If we go back and delve into the moment as Bader is absorbed in drawing the little vampire, we can see that there is a knowing by becoming. There is a meshing between being in the moment and knowing by becoming. Thus, in being in the moment, there is knowing by becoming, and in the knowing by becoming there is being in the moment. It is like two pieces of cotton spun together to form a piece of thread. In a way, they are together like a wave and the water in the ocean. There is no sharp distinction between them. When one moves, the other moves.

Such a phenomena is similar to the moment when Sutung-P'O watched Yu-ko, a famous painter, painting the bamboo. Sutung-P'O, a poet, captures that moment with these beautiful words:

> When Yu-ko painted bamboo,
> He saw bamboo only, never people.
> Did I say he saw no people?
> So rapt he forgot even himself-
> He himself became bamboo,
> Putting out fresh growth endlessly.
> Chuang Tzu no longer with us,
> Who can fathom this uncanny power (1976, p. 107).

This is indeed a good illustration of the melding of the knowing by becoming with being in the moment. "He saw bamboo only, never people. So rapt he forgot even himself-" This seems to be the stage when Yu-ko is being in the moment. Then as his focus becomes deeper and deeper, "He himself became bamboo, putting out fresh growth endlessly." Yu-ko becomes one with the bamboo. Could we say then that, he is "knowing by becoming?"

Fadwa, Mizzy, and Ian are drawing in front of my apartment. Fadwa says her painting is about a bear. Soon they are each engrossed in their drawing. Fadwa frequently makes an excited comment about the mixing of colors. "Look! Green and orange make brown!" Sometimes she encourages other children to look at the merging of colors. But most of the time she is absolutely silent, engrossed in her painting. As each painting is

finished, she steps back to take a look at her painting, and then she takes another piece of paper and begins to paint again. The other children look at Fadwa's paintings and say that they are beautiful. Before long Fadwa announces that she has finished painting. With five sequential pictures in front of her, she begins:

> There are two bears, the bears are walking on the street. The big one went back home because she felt sick. It was sunny out, and then when the little bear was walking, he was going on the beach. There are big waves coming in, and it started to rain. Then the rainbow! The colors were starting to come out. There was a big rainbow!
>
> Finally, we reach the last picture, Fadwa wraps up her narrative by saying:
>
> Those are the colors of the seasons!

I am totally intrigued by Fadwa's picture (Plate V.3), and the technique she used to create it. She picked up a broken piece of blue oil pastel and rolled it from the bottom to the top of the paper. Then she used a purple piece of oil pastel and rolled it to the top. While doing this her eyes are fixed on her hand, her head tilts slightly, her body moves along with the movement of her hand. She is relaxed, passive, lucid, totally engrossed. Her whole body draws with her. Alexander (1984) notes that:

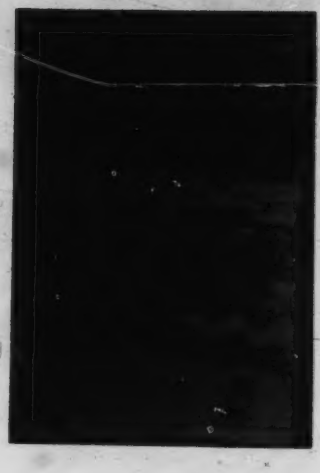
> The moment of creation is probably the only time children's culture is validated. It is an expression of who children are way, way down in the most important part of themselves. It is a time when children do not have to worry or fret about being accepted. Children can be who they want to be *fully. The child is in control of the moment.* They do not have to ask anyone how they should express their point of view. When children are deeply involved in and concentrating on the discipline of creation at the moment of creation, they *are* communicating their point of view (Alexander, 1984, p. 478).

When the whole page is filled with the columns of blue and purple, Fadwa says: "Those are the colors of the seasons!" Somehow in silence the picture vibrates the beautiful colors of the nature in spring time. Out of her simple drawing, many flowers bloom. This is the creation of innocence. Why does this picture appear to be so powerful and strong to me? Its simplicity perhaps? Why did Fadwa use only two colors? Would it have been as strong and as powerful if it had been crowded with more colors? Perhaps not. Tagore (1966) says, "Emptiness of space is necessary for fullness of perception. A

Plate V.3 "The Bears Season"

by

Fadwa



crowd of material is most inimical to the unfolding of life" (p. 5). Perhaps it is the simplicity, that makes this drawing utterly appealing.

In Our Hurried World

What is the essence of this theme, "Being In the Moment?" What do we learn from these children? In other words, what is it that unfolds about their childhood ? They seem to tell us that the true meaning of life is to be in the moment, in the here-and-now. Unfortunately, in our rushed tecnologized world, the immersing of ourselves in the moment appears to be difficult for grown-ups to pursue. Most of the time we are haunted by the bitterness of the past and we are worried by the coming future. Each day we are captured by our work and each day is full of the hurried way of life. As a result we forget to fully live and enjoy the beauty of life. But children seem to live quite differently from us. To them, the rainfall and the snowdrops are great events. They tell us about the beauty of things around them. But since we are totally captured by other things we hardly see the beauty in life. Brandon (1976) describes that moment in this way:

> I found myself walking slowly alongside a mother and small child. It was a fine, crisp, wintry morning and nearby was a stretch of green patterned with snowdrops. The small child's eyes widened in excitement and she tried to halt her mother. "Look, Mumy, see those lovely flowers." I stopped and with her tuition saw them but Mum was driven on and down through the weight of the shopping bags and her fear of missing the bus. The child, dragged protestingly along by the mother, boarded the bus few minutes later. Neither had time to enjoy the snowdrops (p. 70).

This example seems to be a common sight in our present day living. It seems that the rushed and hurried life is spreading more and more each day. Inevitably this hurried life affects the life of our children. In his well-known work The Hurried Child, Elkind (1981) points out to us that the many problems in childhood seem to be the results of our fast pace of living and we forget to live in the here-and-now.

It seems that both at home and at school children are expected to be more and to know more. On Saturday, for example, a child may be rushed to take a swimming lesson in the morning, ballet in the afternoon, and a piano lesson in the evening. Children are

pushed to get involved in too many extra things at one time. They no longer have time to play or even to be themselves. We seem to forget that childhood has its own way of seeing, thinking, and feeling, and nothing is more foolish than to try to substitute ours for theirs (Rousseau, 1957).

What can we do to help our children to live a better life in this rushed world? What do we understand as parents or as teachers about being in the moment? How can we have a happier life? Perhaps we need to take into account the notion of here and now. Elkind (1981) brings to our attention the importance of being in the moment He writes:

> If we concentrate on the here and now, without worrying about yesterday or tomorrow, our children will do like wise. If you are a working mother, enjoy the time you spend with your children and don't spoil it for him or her by worrying about the time you were not around or about the times you will be separated in the future. Children live in the present, and they know when we are with them physically but not mentally. By worrying about the past and future, we lose the present and our children don't have us, even when we are around (p. 199).

Elkind further suggests that we need to take time to enjoy life, to take a little more time to enjoy nature and to share that beauty with our children. He states:

> Over the years, I have made it a practice to take a little time for myself each day, to enjoy a sunset, watch a sparrow, admire a snowflake. Such moments can and should be shared with children. I also take a moment to review the events of the day, to evaluate, without regret, how well I lived up to the goals of devoting full energies to the task at hand. My sense is that such practices are communicated to the children we live with and that the more we incorporate stress relief values into our daily routines, the more children can learn similar strategies (p. 199).

There are other aspects related to the notion of being in the moment which is worth considering. We often say that children have a short attention span. Some even say that the longest attention span in children is about two or three minutes. But is this true? Have we forgotten that children sometime spend hours and hours playing, exploring, and observing the world?

According to my observation and spending time with these children, they spend hours and hours playing and drawing without being distracted from their activity. Perhaps

it is too quick to judge that children have a short attention span. And we need to go back and look again at what we do in our classroom.

I am reminded of my experience observing a grade one class many years ago. The teacher claimed that she used a method called individualized instruction. But what struck me was that the class appeared to be very structured, children were restricted to sit in there chairs, the waiting time for getting help with their work was immense. They could move around only during the time of changing from a big group to a small group. The teacher seemed to put an emphasize on neatness and orderly-ness in the classroom. The learning experiences were mainly paper-pencil work and storybooks. There was one boy who, according to the teacher's comment, was very bright but his attention span was very short and he rarely finished his work. Can we really make such a conclusion, when children are in such an adult directed context?

Thus when we say children do not have a long attention span, are we saying this only from an adult's point of view? Perhaps we are looking at children through "our adult theoretical lenses" (Beekman, 1983, p. 40). This raises the question of whether or not we give our children the right kind of learning experiences, the kind that are challenging and appealing to their interest?

There is much we can learn from children about being in the moment and about living a happier life. We need to let children be our teachers, we need to let them teach us possibilities (Van Manen, 1986). Perhaps we need to live a simpler life, to take more time to enjoy life and children can show us how to do this. We need to seriously ask: What happens to us? Why do many grown ups lose the ability to be in the beauty of moment? When did we lose it?

> Child, how happy you are sitting in the dust,
> playing with a broken twig all the
> morning.
> I smile at your play with that little bit of a
> broken twig.
> I am busy with my accounts, adding up
> figures by the hour.

> Perhaps you glance at me and think, "What a stupid game to spoil your morning with!"
> Child, I have forgotten the art of being absorbed in sticks and mud-pies. . . (Tagore, 1913, p. 23).

Mythifying Reality

> Myths. . . answer the eternal questions: What is the world really like? How am I to live my life in it? How can I truly be myself (Bettelheim, 1977, p.45)?

The notion of mythifying reality demonstrates children's way of understanding the world. Concepts such as power, music, night, fear, competition, and love are often times too abstract for young children to understand. Thus myth or fantasy becomes the vehicle which they use to access knowledge and understanding.

In their drawings, children put down lines and colors to form images. These images are rich with the sounds and movements that help bring meaning to light.

An example of this is Ian's set of pictures about superheroes which he entitled "Super Animals."

In Ian's drawing of Super Animals (see the set of drawings Plate III.4.A-D) he develops a sequential narrative about the battle between two groups of super animals. In the first frame, Ian introduces the good guys. They are drawn indicating the different movements and gestures (leaping, flying, and jumping) displaying their power. Ian explains that this group of super animals includes Fire Bunny, a bear who came from China called "Sammy Bear," and a lizard from the desert called "the Green Iguana." There is also a little mouse, cousin of Mighty Mouse, whose name is Atom Mouse. There is Wonder Cat from the Amazon Cat Tribe. Super Dog who is the pet of Superman; Bad Bat, the pet bat of Batman; and Robin, the bird robin who is the pet of Robin (the person not robin the bird). These animals all have special powers.

In a way, this is how children illustrate their understanding of power. To a young child, the drawing activity could be the vehicle that is used to understand reality.

As we move on to the second frame, Ian seems to know that there is another type of power, the bad power. This group of animals includes Cold Bunny; he is blue and he wears a blue mask.. There is Twirly, he is a brown bear. There is Penguin, who has an "umbrella gun," and Cat woman who is the opposite of Wonder Woman. There is purple Elephant, the elephant who tries to get Green Iguana and Pencil. There is also Dark Dog, the master of all dogs.

Through drawing, children seem to grasp a better understanding of the practical reality of how the world works. There are good people and bad people, in other words, there are good powers and bad powers. There is also something such as joy and sadness.

If we look closely at the colors that Ian uses to depict the good guys, he tends to use bright shades. Notice the color of Fire Bunny, Wonder Cat, Robin, and Super Dog's capes. In contrast, Ian uses dark and subdued colors to draw the bad guys. For example, Cold Bunny, the one on the very top of the page, is with blue and is encircled by a black line. Purple elephant is surrounded by a purple circle, he is wearing a skull and crossbones emblem on his shirt. Is it possible then that children relate colors to meanings? Do dark colors suggest bad power. Is there then a vital connection between the child's thinking and the colors used to depict power?

In the third frame, Ian portrays the battle scene between the good power and the bad power. By using straight lines, circles, and scribbles he illustrates the concept of power. Look at Cat Woman, for example; she is twirling Wonder Woman, and Ian uses scribbles to give the effect. Green Iguana (on the top of the page) is putting Purple Elephant into a trap by a circle; Dark Dog is shooting Penguin with a straight line "bullet."

In the last frame, Ian depicts the escape of the bad guys, "They won, the good guys. The bad guys will escape." His perception of good and evil or good power and bad power seems to be ongoing because the bad guys escape, thus suggests more battles between the good guys and the bad guys.

What is this child doing? Is he perhaps "drawing" his understanding of power, expressing his need to make sense of the abstract concept of power, the struggle of the good and bad?

> Through their drawings, children can portray themselves as either or both the evil or the good (in the same way that in their make-believe play children have universally been alternately *cop* and *robber*, *cowboy* and *Indian*) and may then plot the consequences of each role. in this way they are able to symbolically determine how they might be and how they ought to be (Wilson and Wilson, 1982, p. 31).

Isn't this one of the abstract concepts that human kind has attempted to understand since the ancient time? Isn't it the knowledge of good and bad that separates human kinds from animals? Many myths and stories of the world tell us how human kind tries to make sense of these concepts. The Ramayana, the long story of the gods and demons, for example, symbolizes nothing but the battle between the good and bad. "The Hindus postulate a kind of quantum of good and evil which must be maintained in balance; but whenever the balance tips one way or the other, it must be imagined that divine intervention is required" (Adam, 1982, p. 55).

The names and powers of each animal in Super Animals are expressed in a mythical sense. For example, names such as Twirly or Cold Bunny and power such as twirlalizing (like marinating something), and black ray, these are said in a child's own symbolic language; they are metaphoric speech without analytical thought Yolen (1981).

Children are too young to simply say or express that this is how things occur, especially abstract concepts. However, in order for children to understand the world, they need to pass the abstract concepts through the world of fantasy. There is no line between reality and fantasy in the child's world. When children draw, they mythify things they experience in reality.

For example, it is Thursday evening and Bader appears to be very prolific in his drawing. After completing his first drawing, he begins to draw another set of pictures. "I'm going to draw, 'The Rock Head Gang,' next." Bader talks as he draws. "The Rock

Head Gang" is a group of musicians who give such a poor concert that the audience yells "Boo," and throws tomatos at them. Bader appears to have a lot of fun drawing the "boo" sounds and the throwing of the tomatos (Plate V. 4.C.D).

> There was a gang called, the Rock Head Gang. They were making music, and they played rock music. But it wasn't too good, all the people threw tomatos and they all said, "Boo!" But they knew that they were one of the robber gangs so they took them to jail.

Ian is watching Bader draw "The Rock Head Gang." He is inspired to create a set of pictures called "The Kool Kats." The pictures (Plate V.4.A.B) are about a group of cats (Kit, Tub, and Missy Miss) who love to make music at night.

The Kool Kats

> Kit was a white kitten who loved music. She decided when she grew up she would be a rock star, she even had her own guitar, she lived with an old lady in a small house. Every time she dreamed when she had her own guitar, she dreamed, she was playing a guitar and there was "Kool Kat" up there, and she was in the newspaper (frame 1).
>
> And so when she was old enough she found a big tubby brown cat. His name was Tub. Tub wanted to be in the band because he played the drums. Then she found a girl her name is Missy Miss. Missy Miss played and singed [sic] a bit. So they decided to make a band at the night, "The Kool Kats" [narrates with whispering voice]. And then Kit started singing;
>
> Kitty, kat, kat;
>
> Kitty, kat, kat.
>
> Everybody woke up in the middle of the night and threw boots and a clock at them. And one time they even heard a lady say, "Albert that's my boot." And then they got hit with a giant boot! Well, they decided after that, there'll be no more cats' business on the street, but cats' business for occasions. The end.

Is this perhaps a way for young children to describe to us their understanding of music? To both Ian and Bader music is not serious. It is something that is fun, delightful, lighthearted, and entertaining. Bader, for example, conveys these notions by using bright and strong colors. In his visual narrative, Bader uses red to draw music, "to express something that is delightful." Children seem to enjoy using strong colors. Their powerful use of colors is most impressive. "The child chooses strong colours because he himself is strong and not complicated" (Cizek,1939, p. 32). Drawing about music then is their way of

Plate V.4.A.B "The Kool Kats"

by

Ian

Plate V.4.C.D "The Rock Head Gang"

by

Bader

THE ROCK HEAD GANG C

mythifying the concept of music. As a result, mythifying music enables children to have a better understanding of their world.

Ian's visual narrative of The Kool Kats does not mythify only the concept of music, but it also mythifies the concept of night. If we look at Plate V.4.A, here, Ian successfully expresses the notion of night or darkness. The use of color illustrates the atmosphere of night which the story talks about. There is an effective link in the child's use of colors, lines, and shades of hue to paint the "texture of the night." Notice for example Ian's use of the "blue" to draw the street, and "to color the night."

Let us look at another visual narrative created by Ian. Ian is busy composing a set of four pictures. It is obvious that he is in a happy mood. He composes the first three pictures on a piece of black paper. The last one is on a piece of gray paper. He whispers, "Super Ghosts! Okay, this is Wonder Ghost, Samurai, . . ." They seem to be the names of the characters. When he finishes drawing, he shows me his visual narrative. As I look at the picture my eyes dilate with surprize, it is obvious that Ian is exploring a different way of drawing, very unusual, and very exciting (Plate V.5).

The Super Ghosts

> There were streaks of lights over the city. Eight ghosts were riding around looking for any danger. They were Wonder Ghost, Samurai, Thunder Bolt, and Bat Ghost. And then all of a sudden they saw these bad guys like. . .

If we take a close look at this visual narrative, could it be that Ian is mythifying the concept of night and ghosts? By means of depicting images on a black piece of paper, the feelings of the night touches all. The blackness of the paper represents the black sky at night. Although, this visual narrative renders the night mood, the body of the ghosts in the first frame appear untouched by the shade of night. Their white bodies (the color that we associate with ghosts), capes, and costumes of blue, yellow, red, and orange glow in the night. Perhaps this is to show another image which is their fructifying powers.

Plate V.5 "The Super Ghosts"

by

Ian

Ian depicts the ghosts in a rather obscure manner. Notice the face of the ghosts and their movements; Ian depicts them by using lines. What will happen then if Ian makes the figures too distinct, perhaps the pictures will not be so powerful, and most of all, the poetry of night may dissipate. Could we say then that this child has an understanding of the night?

Finally, in the last frame, a gray paper is ued. This may be to suggest that dawn is approaching. The bad ghosts escape. Ian depicts the escaping of the bad ghosts by using simple lines and yet they are very powerful. Each ghost is drawn using a line of a different length and color (a straight line, zigzag, wavy line, a curved line with a little loop at the end). Ian seems to have successfully communicated the images of the ghosts and night. At this point in the child's development, the use of color, texture, lines, and hues is beginning to express the child's notions and impressions of the world. Drawing about the night and ghosts is a way of mythifying them and in turn bringing about a better understanding of these abstract concepts. "Myths, as serious statements play an important role in the life of of the child. It can be the child's key to understanding his or her own existence. It can also be the key to our understanding of the child" (Yolen, 1981, p. 18).

In their drawings, the children not only express the concept of music, but also the concept of fear. Scary topics such as draculas, monsters, and ghosts are sometimes the focus of their visual narratives.

Bader and Ian are entertaining themselves by drawing a monster (Plate V.6.A.B). I watch both of them take an oil pastel and begin. Bader bravely makes a line to form something, "A monster, an ugly monster," he whispers. Ian's drawing begins to take shape, it is a monster as well. Both of them share their drawings of a monster and start to laugh about what they have drawn. The monster that both of them drew has "millions" of legs, "millions" of hands, ten eyes, three noses, and a very large mouth. Both Ian and Bader have a fairy kill this ugly monster. Although Bader draws a monster, the story turns out to be about beasts and ghosts:

Once there were two beasts, one was the big horrible monster that had a million hands and a million legs, and eight mouths, and two faces, and had four eyes, three noses, and he lived in a very spooky jungle.

There was another enemy that he fights with. It was a dumb kind of ghost. It was the king of all ghost that ever lived. Then there was a king of all the monsters and ghosts and he was as strong as any one can be , but there was bat that people called him Mr. Scribble Bat because he scribbled a lot. When he saw the green monster, that green monster that had lots of eyes, and four noses, and a million mouths and two faces, and a million legs, a million hands, and he scribbled all over him, but then he scribbled all over his mouths. The good fairy made him get killed. The end.

At that moment Ian anxiously joins in and his story begins to unfold (Plate V.6.C.D):

The Magic Touch

Once there was a monster called Zeog, he is a ugliest [sic] monster you ever see. He has big [speaks with a long (i) sound] blue ears, ten eyes, ten pink eyes, three noses and one giant mouth. He had hair all over his body, four tentacles, four white tentacles, and six hands, and also there is a good fairy. The monster had a giant crown, and there was a fairy she was the princess of all the fairies. The fairy said, "That's enough of you monster. " [The fairy spoke with a furious voice.] If I tap you with this magic wand, you'll probably turn to a baby monster, or in an egg." So she tapped him and tapped and tapped him with her magic wand and there was something neat happened! It turned to a white tentacle. The eyes began to disappear, it turned black and smaller and beside the fairy and there stood the king's son. His mane was John. He was good. He had a magic wand.

"Oh! Hi [Ian speak with a surprising voice.] I am a princess of fairies. My name is Tracy," said the princess.

"My name is John, the magic prince. I'm the son of a king," said John. And then they both got married and they lived happily ever after. The end

Why do children draw draculas, monsters, ghosts, and other scary things? Perhaps it is their way of trying to understanding fear, the fear of darkness or monsters that children often talk about. Although ghosts, draculas, and monsters appear to be frightening, they are "simply another fact of the world to be examined and understood and anticipated, perhaps made less frightening, as are most of our fears once revealled" (Wilson and Wilson, 1982, p. 36). When children draw draculas, monsters, and so on, these could be the mythification of the reality. How do children understand their worlds? One way is to draw pictures. But these pictures are not real; they are in a sense like myth. Mythifying

Plate V.6.A.B

Bader's visual narrative about the beasts and ghosts

Plate V.6.C.D "The Magic Touch"

by

Ian

A

C

B

D

reality is a child's way of making simple that which is difficult and otherwise unaccessable. And while children engage in putting the images of these concepts on the paper, "the images," Campbell (1988) says, "are outward, but their refection is inward" (p. 56- 57). Or as Campbell further puts it, "the journey inward."

> One thing that comes out in myths is that at the bottom of the abyss comes the voice of salvation. The black moment is the moment when the real message of transformation is going to come. At the darkest moment comes the light (p. 37).

To mythify is an art of thinking, an eidetic reduction, or in other words a thinking in images. Not only children have this kind of thinking, but so did people in the ancient time. Listen to this story drawn from the Ramakien, the Thai version of Ramayana:

> There was a beautiful goddess named Megkhala who loved dancing on the rain clouds before it started to rain. Whenever she came out to dance, a demon called Ramasura, who was head over heels in love with her. He would come out to confess his faithful love and propose marriage. In stead of acknowledging his love, she danced around and aggravated him by flashing her gem stone into his eyes. In utmost fury, he hurled his magic axe at Megkhala. At that moment Megkala gracefully tossed her weapon, the gem stone, and thus the collision of two magic weapons in space gave out the bright light and the roaring noise. This is a story of how thunder and lightning occur (Part of the Thai oral tradition).

This story seems to be an explanation of a natural phenomenon. Perhaps this is a way of understanding the fear that is caused by the roaring sound and the lightening that is so powerful during the monsoon months. By putting this abstractions into images enabled people in the ancient times to understand life. This could further explain how truth in the Thai culture emanates, truth emanates from myth or fantasy. In the same way, children, when they draw about an abstract concept, gain a better understanding of that concept. When the fear images such as monsters, vampire, beasts, and ghosts appear on a piece of paper, the concept is no longer abstract. This is important because these images have become something that is concrete to them, thus it is easy for them to understand. "According to this view children draw as a way of materially realizing their fears, to make them more real, and so more easily negotiated" (Duncum, 1985, p. 44).

What are other concepts that children mythify? Bader seems to be engaged in drawing something that is quite different from other children. He lets his ideas flow out to fill the whole space, like the flowing of a river his imagination comes as easy as breathing. How wonderful, how exciting it is! This time his picture is about a topic that he loves, a hockey game! But most importantly Bader has fun drawing this picture (Plate V.7.D), because he makes the lines come to life:

The Floor Hockey Game

> There was a hockey game at North Park Valley and Wayne Gretsky won the 48th game in floor hockey. The Jets lost and the Oilers won 38 to nothing. There was a very, very short hockey player, that was called Jimmy Shorty and when the hockey players saw him they were afraid.
>
> On the roof, there were robbers. They were very tough, and they were trying to get the Stanley cups from Wayne Gretsky from the hockey game. The captain shot a police officer and got killed. One of the robbers took two of the Stanley Cups and another robber jumped down with the bag of Stanley Cups.
>
> There was a policeman that was holding the meter stick to see how tall the robber is. And the robber who was standing punched the policeman that caughten [sic] him, and the captain took the big bag of Stanley Cups and took them. Well, they weren't really robbers, they were hockey players in Wayne Gretzky gang, who wanted all the Stanley Cups. The end.

Our modern world is full of winning and losing games. This kind of culture permeates in our everyday life as well as children's world. Could it be that by drawing a picture about a hockey game Bader is trying to make meaning of competition? Perhaps by putting the notion of competition in the context of fantasy or mythification, Bader can come close to its clearer meaning.

There is another visual narrative (Plate V.7.A.B.C) composed by Bader that seems to express a similar idea:

The Scribbling Contest

> Once there was a dog called Snoopy, he started to join the scribbling contest. He scribbled so much and ripped so much. He won first prize, another dog won second prize. And Snoopy got six stuff, three medals and three Stanley Cups. The end.

Children mythify what they see and experience. This time Bader uses a cartoon character, Snoopy, who he is familiar with, in a competitive situation, the scribbling

Plate V.7.A.B.C "Scribbling Contest"

by

Bader

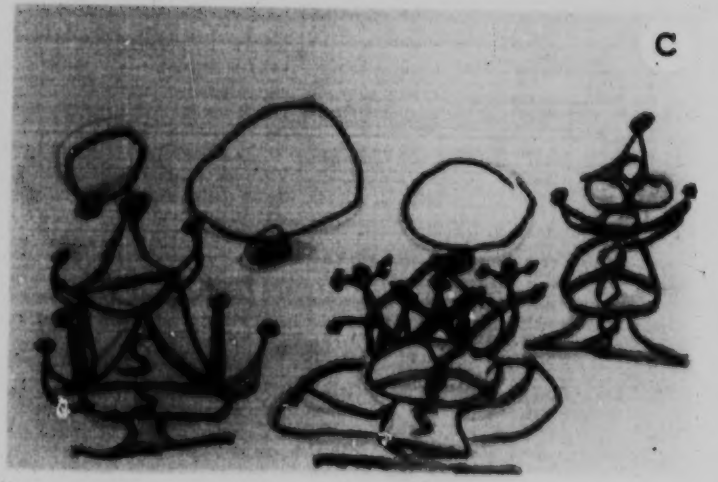
Plate V.7.D "The Floor Hockey Game"

by

Bader

A

B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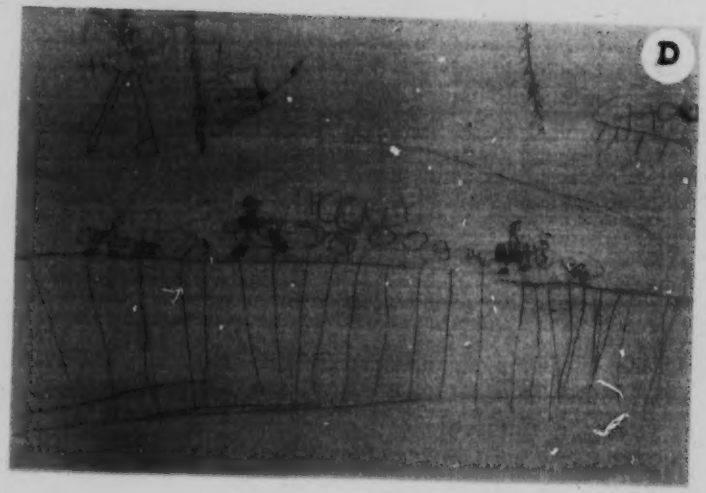
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contest. Scribbling is a natural thing to children, and thus to win the first prize one must do their best in scribbling. As Bader has said, "He [Snoopy] scribbled so much and ripped so much. He won the first prize." Does this mean that the child understands that in competition, we aim at winning? Does it mean that, to win, means we have to do our best even in scribbling? Does it mean that competition is related to rewarding? Perhaps to Bader there are no other rewards in life that would be as high as the Stanley Cup.

Children not only mythify the concept of competition, but they also mythify other abstract concepts such as love. One of Fadwa's visual narratives seems to speak eloquently of this point. There are two sets of pictures in this visual narrative. Fadwa draws two pictures to tell about a girl who is in love (Plate V.8.E.F). Notice how Fadwa uses cheerful colors to express the feeling of being in love. Red and pink roses drawn on a green background produce a sharp contrast and yet suggesting happiness and cheerfulness which is the feeling from being in love. Look at also the way Fadwa draws someone who is in love: her hair is beautifully decorated with a red rose and her dress is very stylish also. Isn't it true that love brings happiness? As Fadwa spins the fantasy around her drawing, at the same time she gains a better understanding of the concept of being in love.

Mizzy enjoys creating a visual narrative that expresses being in love as well. Mizzy draws sequential pictures to tell a romantic story which she puts together to form a book (Plate V.8.A.B.C.D). On the first page, she draws sequential pictures to tell a romantic story. She draws two fluttering butterflies, a radiating sun, and blooming flowers. Then Mizzy tells this story:

> A girl butterfly went out to fly one day.
> She met a boy butterfly and she winked at him.
> And he winked back.

Is this drawing perhaps this child's innocent way of describing to us her understanding of falling in love? Possibly these three beautiful things (butterflies, the sun, and blooming flowers) speak to her about love and being in love. Perhaps a young child

Plate V.8.A.B.C.D

Mizzy's visual narrative about a boy butterfly and a girl butterfly

Plate V.8.E.F

Fadwa's visual narrative about a girl in love

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A

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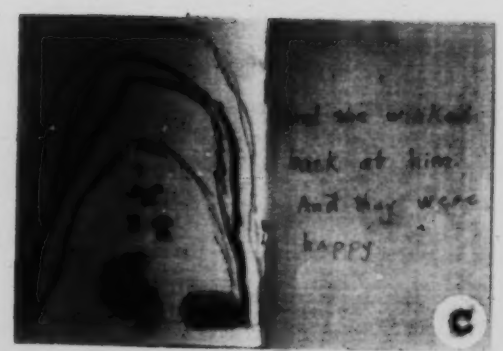
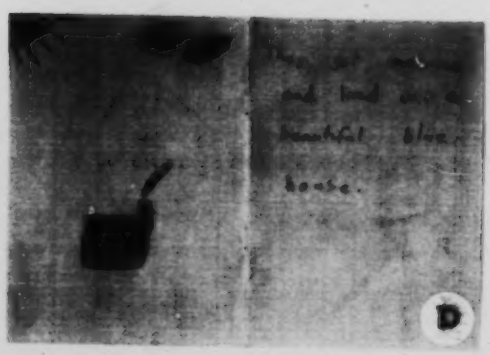

back at him.
And they were
happy
C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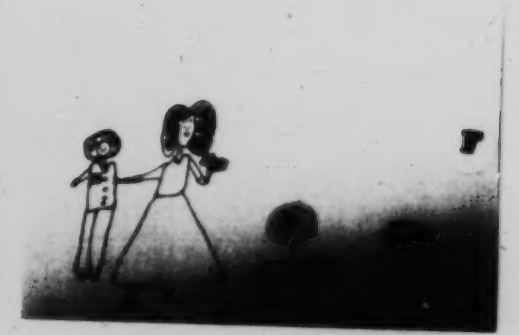
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knows about the relationships of things. Butterflies and flowers are beautiful and so is love. The sun and love both give a feeling of warmth.

In the second picture there is a big rainbow, the symbol of happiness. The rainbow is large and almost fills the page. The two butterflies appear small under the big arch of happiness. The frog, who happens to be there, sits cross-legged and shyly gazes at the happy butterflies.

Finally the conclusion of the story, a happy ending: "They got married and lived in a beautiful blue house." The sun, the sign of warmth and energy appears again. The blue clouds of the summer months are floating above. There is also a little house where the boy butterfly and the girl butterfly live. The love sign, "xo xo," is drawn on the chimney and on the door of the house.

Could it be then that these images Mizzy creates on the paper are metaphors, the images that suggest something else? Through their drawing activity, children make their initial effort to derive their own meaning and understanding of abstract things such as love. In a sense, children attempt to understand the concept of being in love by putting love in the context of fantasy.

Mythification is a means that we use to gain an appreciation and to grasp a fuller meaning in our being. Consider the image Santa Claus, isn't it another form of mythifying reality? We all know that there is no Santa Claus. But what is the purpose for this myth then? Campbell (1988) explains thus:

> Santa Claus is metaphoric of a relationship between parents and children. The relationship does exist, and so it can be experienced, but there is no Santa Claus. Santa Claus was simply a way of clueing children into the appreciation of a relationship (p. 65)

In other words, what Campbell is trying to convey is that the concept of this myth, Santa Claus, becomes a vehicle or the "mythic voice" (Lewis, 1983) that leads to a better understanding of love and caring.

Possibly for young children, drawing could be their "mythic voice, inventing and clarifying the world" (Lewis, 1983, p. 216). And in terms of myth Lewis further states:

> Like all myths, the core of the events is not only the events themselves, but the revelation to us of the human quest to understand. Myth, in some wonderful fashion, is the mirror of the "inward" voice attempting to be heard. The child's discovery of mythic language reveals realms of meanings that give to his or her ripening consciousness a startling vibrancy and excitement (p. 219).

In a way, mythifying reality illustrates a child's way of thinking. Although we may call it mythification, perhaps for children to mythify is real to them, it is a part of childhood. In fact, mythification is a part of our life. When we send young men to war, we call them warriors, they go to fight. This is another type of mythifying reality. In an older culture such as the Thai culture, myths seem to be the corpus of our existence. For example, we believe that life is composed of two forms: physical body and the other is called "kwan" (pronounced with a rising tone). This notion of "kwan" is sometimes referred to as "living essence" (Klausner, 1987), or it is perhaps what Steiner (1981) terms "etheric body or life-body." Kwan is actually a kind of force "that produces phenomena in life, just as the magnetic force is present in the magnet producing the phenomena of attraction" (pp. 9-10). Kwan is indeed a very important aspect of the Thai psychology.

> The Thai deems his head to be sacred; probably because the head is the seat of an individual "kwan" that is, one's vital spirit which gives strength and health to the individual owner. The "kwan" is very sensitive and when subjected to any undecorous behaviour, it will feel injured and leave the body, its abode, to stray somewhere in a forest, and will return only to its abode after a more or less ceremonial cajolery. During the time before the "kwan" returns, its owner will suffer a weakening of his "dignified splendour". . . followed by bad luck and ill health" (Anuman Rajadhon, 1969, p. 170).

Thus from this belief evokes "kwan ceremonies." For example, in the North and the Northeast of Thailand the wedding ceremony is essentially a "kwan ceremony." This is the transitional stage of life, therefore the "kwan" needs to be strengthened and secured. In

the Northeast, there is a kwan ceremony even for a water buffalo in order to secure the etheric body of the buffalo and to show appreciation and thankfulness.

In a case when a child has a nightmare or a minor sickness caused by fright, such as falling from a tree, Thais may say that the child's etheric body has left its owner. The next evening a simple form of kwan ceremony will be performed by the grandmother or the mother, but preferably the grandmother who holds the most respect in the family. At dusk when the night is approaching, the grandmother steps down from the house, carrying a long piece of white cloth. One end is wrapped around a rice ball, a banana, a small bouquet of white flowers and some pieces of white cotton thread. Heading to the tree where the child had fallen, she walks around it, beckoning the kwan of that child to come home with her. The grandmother returns home, now the "bundle of kwan" is untied in front of the child. Then the rice ball of caring, the banana of sweetness and tenderness, and a flower that will bring beauty back to life are placed in the child's hand. The grandmother takes a piece of white thread and ties a knot around the child's arm symbolizing the kwan is being tied and at the same time she gives the child her blessings and wishes for a quick recovery. Then it is the time for other family members to give their blessings and to tie the thread around the child's arm. When the ceremony ends, the child takes a bite of the rice ball and the banana. Indeed, they are only a simple rice ball and a banana, but, they are the symbols of love and are more valuable than an expensive doll or toy.

This is a Thai way of mythifying reality. Through the power of myth the child experiences love and caring. Through myth the child's psychological aspect is strengthened and secured. Myth, like a bridge, takes us from the unknown to the known. Myth, like a raft, takes us to the other shore, the shore of understanding. And to make a raft we need to gather wood and ropes. In a metaphoric sense, a rice ball, a banana, a bouquet of white flowers, and some pieces of white thread are parts of a raft, a mythical raft if you like. "Thus mythification is perhaps our first signal that we are not dreaming,

but awake in a world rich in narrative and psychological as well as physical capacity" (Caples-Osorio, 1989, p. 69).

In a sense, when children engage in art work they are assembling bits and pieces of their experiences about the world. Their drawings connect their thinking and meaning about reality. The experience of drawing to a great extent "mythifies" an otherwise ungraspable reality. The drawing places a perspective on reality and the child is able to understand the abstract concepts because of its accessible context in "fantasy" familiar to the qualitative nature of children's thinking.

But what does this notion of mythifying reality mean to parents and educators? How important is myth to the growth of our children? What should we do with this notion of mythifying reality? Should we stop our youngsters producing images such as superheroes? Perhaps not because mythifying reality is part of children's life. There are many ways that a child mythifies reality. For example, we may witness a child talking to a doll, a dog or even a tree as if they were a human being. This is also a way of mythifying reality. Bettelheim (1977) suggests that a child is self-centered and expects the animals to talk about the things which are really significant. Bettelheim further suggests that, "A child is convinced that the animal understands and feels with him, even though it does not show it openly" (p. 46). Reading a book called My Sweet Orange Tree written by Jose Mauro de Vasconselos (1970), one may provide a moving experience of the child's world of mythifying reality. In the story Zeze has put his favorite sweet orange tree into a context of fantasy. This orange becomes his real friend like a human being. He even names his tree Minguinho. When he is pleased with the tree, Zeze gives it a special name, Xururuca. The whole story is carried on as a conversation between the child and his favorite tree. A research study undertaken by Kalyan-Masih (1983) reveals that children often play with an imaginary friend(s) which they have created when playing alone. The study suggests that the imaginary friend is very real to the children.

Children award life to things. Piaget's (1977) work, for example, tells us that children's thinking remains animistic until they reach the age of puberty. He hays:

> To the eight-year-old, the sun is alive because it gives light. To the child's animistic mind, the stone is alive because it can move, as it rolls down a hill. Even a twelve-and-a-half-year-old is convinced that a stream is alive and has a will, because its water is flowing. the sun, the stone, and the water are believed to be inhabited by spirits very much like people, so they feel and act like people (p. 46)

And so as grown ups we need to acknowledge this as a beautiful part of our being. Campbell (1988) says, "I think of mythology as the homeland of muses, the inspirers of art, the inspirers of poetry. To see life as a poem and yourself participating in a poem is what myth does for you" (p. 55). Myth is indeed a vital part of our being and needs to be considered serious in our education. Yolen (1981) writes:

> These four functions of myth. . . should establish the listening to and learning of the old tales as being among the most basic elements of our education: creating a landscape of allusion, enabling us to understand our own and other cultures form the inside out, providing an adaptable tool of therapy, and stating in symbolic or metaphoric terms the abstract truths or our common human existence (p. 19).

Chapter VI

APPRECIATION

In this last chapter, the skein of my thinking is gathered in the threads of appreciation. First, an appreciation of children's visual narratives is discussed, this is followed by an appreciation of the Thai culture.

An Appreciation Of Visual Narratives

What is it like for a child to experience visual narratives? What is the essence of this experience? What does the child's creation of visual narratives reveal to us about the experience of being a child? The various themes in this study point to a better understanding and appreciation of the world of childhood. In a way, the theme bundal-jai (inspiration) illustrates the moments that evoke visual narratives, and twi-laksana (the duality of vision) provides numerous portraits of visual narratives created by the children. The variety of renderings speak of different ways in which children depict or portray their work of art--visual narratives.

Bundal-Jai: Inspiration

> Hearts, like doors, open with ease
> to very tiny little keys (Mole, 1973, p. 137)

There are moments that evoke the creation of visual narratives. These moments are the beginning, the dawn of creation. These moments appear to be like an opening to a new landscape. Bundal-jai is an "ah!" of the starry night mood. It is the stunning moment when we are captured by the beauty of flowers or the sunset. Yasuda (1957) describes that moment with these words:

> I know that when one happens to see a beautiful sunset or lovely flowers for instance, he is often so delighted that he merely stands still. This state of mind might be call "ah-ness" for the beholder can only give one breath-long exclamation of delight: "Ah!" The object has seized him and he is

> aware only of the shapes, the colors, the shadows, the blendings. In a brief moment he sees a pattern, a significance he had not seen before (p. 30).

Within this ah-ness "there is an opening to the world in wonder with a small child marvelling" (Spock, 1980, p. 63). There is a moving into a new landscape. There is a joyful feeling of discovery. This is the kind of feeling that prompts us to express and to create. In the bundal-jai, there is spontaneity, a joy of wonderment. It is a celebration!

Since children's visual narratives are usually play arts, and since they evolve spontaneously, it would be rather difficult to bring the theme bundal-jai into a classroom in which the children are expected "to create" at a certain time or on a day to suit according to a pre-planned timetable. On the contrary, the creation of visual narrative is possible only in a less structured classroom. We know that children are spontaneous, but how can we respond to their spontaneity? The following example provides us with some insights.

Lewis (1982) organizes a workshop with young children around the idea of "daydreaming." In this work, spontaneity is highly valued. Children are encouraged to express themselves through the various ways of image-making: painting, drama, movement and writing. Lewis says:

> When the children began to understand that there was a distinct correlation between the impulse to express something, and the ability to daydream the object of this expression into being, to allow themselves a free-floating period of time to gestate their feelings and ideas, then they were happening around them and allow them to enter their words--and from them invent, of daydream, other situations. One such "situation" happened one day in class outside our window when there was a terrible screech of brakes and the sound of breaking grass and metal from a car crash. We all rushed to the window to see two cars locked into each other. After a fair amount of discussion and the comparing of times we personally had been involved in a car crash, they all sat down and wrote "daydreams" based on what had just happened. Nicola, who was eight years old, daydreamt this:
>
> The bird crashed into rock.
> The flower crashed into the ant.
> The water crashed into the sink.
> The pencil crashed into the paper.
> The pin crashed into the pin-cushion.
> The clock crashed into the time (p. 49).

It takes a sensitive pedagogue to understand the nature of children. Lewis moves right into the moment and makes use of what is happening in that moment instead of taking

the children back to what they were engaged in. There is not one moment that is the same as another every moment in life is valuable and meaningful. A good teacher needs to be aware, alert, and responsive to every moment in the classroom. When the act of creation is spontaneous and not contrived, the result is always beautiful.

Thus there are moments that invite visual narratives: playing, smelling of felt pens, reading books, daydreaming, nature walks, and interacting with friends. In a way, the moment of creation "flowers" from our sense of hearing, seeing, smelling, touching, and imagining.

Twi-Laksana: Duality of Vision

> Man seeks to form for himself, in whatever manner is suitable for him, a simplified and lucid image of the world [*Bild der welt*], and so to overcome the world of experience by striving to replace it to some extent by this image. This is what the painter does, and the poet, the speculative philosopher, the natural scientist, each in his own way. Into this image and its formation he places the center of gravity of his emotional life, in order to attain the peace and serenity that he cannot find within the narrow confines of swirling, personal experiences (Eistein, 1977, p. 141).

Within the boundary of twi-laksana or the duality of vision which is essentially the communion of these two art forms: drawing and storying, we find that children explore a unity of experiencing.

There are many types of flowers in a garden. Children's visual narratives in a metaphoric sense are like flowers in a garden. Some are like a rose, others may have the fragrance of jasmine. Some may have the elegant look of an orchid. Each has its own unique beauty and fragrance and every visual narrative is a marvel in itself, a beautiful, unique diamond. Each contains different movements, rhythms, and styles that evoke a range of feelings.

Portrayed through various styles (telling-drawing, weaving-storying, sequencing-storying, and creating visual haiku), we find the portraits of visual narratives. And in the

creation of visual narratives children illustrate their ways of configuring, of solving, of making sense of their world, and other abstracting concepts.

Telling-drawing. In this type of visual narrative we discover that children's visual narratives evolve while the talking and drawing occur interchangeably. Children talk and act out a scene as they draw it. In other words, the child "makes the sounds of airplanes, cars, guns, and explosions. He jumps and squirms in the action that swirls around him in his art work" (Flannery, 1980, p. 34). In a telling-drawing, the picture comes alive because of the many movements, sound effects, and actions of the characters.

Weaving-storying. We observe that there is a similarity between telling-drawing and weaving-storying. Here the children also talk as they draw. Drawing and storying occur interchangeably, but there is a difference. In the weaving-storying, images or actions are woven into one another. As new images and new colors are added, the picture changes to be a new picture, and its meaning also changes, to a new horizon, vision, or image emerging in the picture. It is like the development of a butterfly that moves from an egg to a larva, then becoming a caterpillar, and finally emerging as a beautiful butterfly.

Sequencing-storying. We find that this kind of visual narrative is composed in a sequence with a beginning, a middle, and an end. Within the realm of sequencing-storying, we find that children express themselves in many ways. There is the visual narrative which is created like a cartoon strip. Sometimes it is created with the sophisticated technique of an animated cartoon in which each little square shows the gradual movement of an object. There is also a book-like visual narrative, in which children create separate pictures to tell a story.

Creating visual haiku. This is a rather unique way of creating visual narrative. When children create a visual haiku we note that the simplistic images in the picture become an outlet of a story. Perhaps these images are like seeds that rest in silence, ready to germinate. The picture is created in a simplistic manner, but the story can be quite

elaborate. In a way, this is an appreciation of the simplicity of lines and forms illustrated in children's visual narratives.

Thus the notion of "twi-laksana" points to that melding of drawing and storying which brings together a piece of art that speaks of children's unique experiences. In a way, a visual narrative illustrates a reciprocal relationship between the visual and the narrative. Sometimes the drawing generates the story, at other times the story generates the drawing. Wilson and Wilson (1982) say:

> Drawing then, becomes a natural vehicle for the narrative; the narrative, in turn promotes greater quantities of drawings, as well as the need to create figures and objects with more and more complexity, action, and detail (p. 102).

Renderings

Experiencing time and space. In this theme, we discover children's experience of time and space. It illustrates that children need both an ongoing activity and flexible time in order to work. There is evidence that children's visual narratives do not form in chunks or sections. They flow and are spontaneous.

Young children enjoy working with a big space, not a small, confining area. This reminds me of the kind of material that I provided for the children. One day "write-on-slides" were added to the paper that we regularly used. The children were excited about the new materials, but when they drew, they did not enjoy these write-on-slides because the space was rather small.

Asking in the telling. When children create a visual narrative, sometimes the story is an "inquiry" rather than a "telling." Curious children always ask questions of many kinds even ones they are unable to answer. "Parents and teachers are good pedagogues when they model possible ways of being for the child" (Van Manen, 1986, p. 13). Van Manen further explains:

> They can do that if they realize that adulthood itself is never a finished project. Life forever questions us about the way it is to be lived. . . . We

> pedagogues (teachers and parents) willingly open ourselves to children. This means that we do our utmost to understand what it is like to be in the world as a child. More concretely, I do my very best to understand the situation of *this* child (p. 13).

Knowing by becoming. In making up their own visual narrative, children seem to dwell in their story-picture-world. The child and the characters fuse into one. The notion of knowing by becoming "may be defined as an instant in which man becomes united to an object, virtually becomes the object and realizes the eternal, universal truth contained in being" (Giroux, 1974, pp. 45-46). What is it like for a child to fuse into one with the character while creating visual narratives? Perhaps the following story can give us a better insight into the notion of knowing by becoming.

> Once upon a time, I Chuang Tzu, dreamt I was a butterfly, fluttering hither and thither, to all intents and purposes a butterfly. I was conscious only of following my fancies a butterfly, and was unconscious of my individuality as a man. Suddenly, I awoke, and there I lay, myself again. Now I do not know whether I was then a man dreaming I was a butterfly dreaming or whether I am now a butterfly dreaming I am a man (Sohl and Carr, 1970, p. 117).

Here, perhaps, the observer has become observed, as in the moment when observing a rose, we become a rose. The observer and the observed fuse into one, and there is no boundary between them.

Being in the moment. When children create a drawing to tell a story we note their ability to focus on the work at hand. As they create, children fully live in the moment, in the here-and-now. When one fully lives in the moment, one truly lives. Being in the moment is the innate ability of childhood. The art of being in the moment seems to be the part of living that many grown ups have lost. We are either captured by the past or worried about the future. But how did we lose this innate ability? When did we lose it?

> The child comes running in and cries: "Look, mother, look; see what I've found!" Her eyes are bright with smile, little red-glass bangles dance and tinkle with the joyous clapping of hands. She puts her arms around her mother's neck and cries: "Look, mother, look; see what I've found!"
>
> It is a bird's feather tinted blue and gold. To a child's ears it whispers stories of the sky and clouds, the nest and the screechings of young ones, the gladness of dawn and hope of flight. The child runs the

> feather over cheeks and eyes and cries in eagerness of heart: Look, mother, look; see what I've found!"
>
> Mother looks at it and breaks into laughter. "What a treasure you have found, darling!" she says, and throws away the feather, and hurries off to do her housework.
>
> The child sinks on the floor, even as a broken-winged bird. The smile in her eyes is gone. She rises after a while and picks up the feather. Since then her treasure lies hidden away even from mother's sight (Tagore, 1958, p. 98).

Mythifying reality. The visual narratives children create are, in a way, like myths, in the sense that the visual narratives become a vehicle for understanding abstract concepts beyond the children's ability to understand. In the East, myth is part of our way of life because it is a way of understanding life. People travel through myth to reach the truth. Since children's visual narratives are a way of understanding, their creations can be called "myths" or living bridges that a child can cross to reach into the unknown.

What are the abstract concepts that children mythify? In this theme, "mythifying reality," we discover that children mythify concepts of power, music, night, fear, competition, and love.

To appreciate children's visual narratives is also to appreciate childhood. If we ponder upon the word "kindergarten," which means children garden then perhaps we could say that children are like beautiful flowers in a garden. We know that the enchanting beauty of a garden comes from the multitude colors and the different fragrances contained in each one. Children, too, bring with them to this world their own beauty and differences. And thus, being with these children, Mizzy, Fadwa, Bader, and Ian, I had an opportunity to reflect, to prod and to probe deeper into the meaning of visual narratives. This experience enabled me to become a new person. I learned and experienced new things from what is presented to me. This experience has enabled me to have a better understanding of children's world.

Further to this, children point to us what we, as adult, may have lost--the beauty of the simple meanings of life. Through their innosence, children show us joy, spontineity, free spirit, creativy, and sincerity.

From A Banana Leaf To A Plastic Bag

Once upon a time there was a peaceful land surrounded by mountains. This land was a fertile place with an abundance of rice in the rice field, fish in the water, fruit on the trees, and wild animals in the forest. The king and queen who ruled this country were very kind and gentle. They had a beautiful daughter. It was the tradition of the king and queen that each year during the flower festival they would journey to the forest to see the blooming flowers. This year the beautiful princess joined them. While they were travelling, it was unusually hot and the drinking water was gone. The princess was so thirsty that she could not endure it any longer. She saw some water that was trapped inside an elephant's tracks, and stepping down from her chariot, she scooped the water into her mouth to quench her thirst. The foot prints belonged to the king of the elephants who lived in that forest. But something happened, and when she returned to the palace, she became pregnant from drinking the water. Thus the father of her baby was the king of the elephants. Later on the princess gave birth to a fine baby girl with beautiful eyes and a complexion the color of the full moon. Moreover, there was something special about the new baby: her hair had a beautiful fragrance. When she grew a bit older, the child asked her mother about her father. When she learned that her father was the king of the elephants who lived in the deep mountains, she decided to go to the forest to see him. The king of the elephants was delighted to see his daughter. He decorated the cave and turned it into a beautiful place for his daughter. The princess with fragrant hair was very happy with her father. The king of the elephants was very kind to his daughter and he took good care of her. Every morning he would give her a ride on his back to pick the flowers and in the evening they swam together in the cool river. She was so happy that she decided to stay with her father. Many years passed and the princess grew to be a truly beautiful woman.

One day, while she was bathing in the the river by herself, she took a golden urn and put some pieces of her hair in it, made a wish, and let the little urn float along the river. The little urn slowly drifted away. Many months passed before a poor villager discovered the urn at the river bank near his hut. When he opened it, he found the pieces of hair with their beautiful smell. He took the urn to the palace and gave it to the prince, the future king of that kingdom. The beautiful fragrance of the hair captured the prince deeply. He sent his men far and wide to search for the owner of the urn. Finally, one of them came back to the king with an exciting story about a young princess who drank water from the footprint of an elephant, became pregnant, and gave birth to the owner of the mysterious urn. When the prince knew that the princess was living with her father the elephant, he gathered some soldiers and began the journey to the mountains where the princess with the fragrant hair lived. It was love at first sight! The prince asked permission from the king of the elephants to marry his daughter. The king of the elephants gave them his blessings. They got married, and the prince took his bride to his kingdom, where lived happily ever after (Part of the Thai oral tradition).

This is a bedtime story told to me by my mother when I was young. The story has been handed down from generation to generation. It is not surprising that the mountains and the dense jungle in our home town evoke the story. I could remember that we (my brother and I) listened to this story over and over without getting bored. As the story began, my mind took wings to the unmapped land, where a range of mountains surrounded our home town where the king of the elephants and his daughter lived. Indeed it is a place where no scientist or mathematician can fly. This story may appear to be unscientific and even absurd, but within the landscape of childhood, magical things are possible.

As I reflect upon this story, it seems to express different nuances of meanings. In a subtle and gentle way, this may be a way of giving children sex education. Indeed it may appear to be absurd and unscientific for a girl to be impregnated by drinking the water inside the elephant track. It is interesting that there are a number of similar stories. For example there is a story about a princess who becomes pregnant from eating an eggplant picked from a man's garden. Do we always need to give young children the technical facts of things? Are they really ready for the scientific answers? The Thai people prefer to prolong the answers or the explanations of things until the children are older and ready for them. It seems to be better for us to explain things by telling a story and thus keeping the question open for young children.

The story also reflects the relationship between father and daughter, and the deep relationship between the Thai people and the elephants. In our Thai culture, children are expected to show respect and gratitude to parents. But why an elephant as a father? This story attempts to show in a radical sense that even though your father is an elephant he is your father; thus you give him love and respect.

If we look more closely at the elephants in Thailand, we find them hold an important role. In ancient time the elephant fought courageously with the Thai soldiers in the battlefield. Before changing to the tri-colored flag, the elephant was chosen as the emblem on the flag of Thailand. It is recorded in Thai history that during the reign of King

Rama III (1824-1851) of Ratanakosin (Bangkok), Thailand had establish a good relationship with the United States of America. During that time Abraham Lincoln was elected as the president. It was also during this time that the Civil War broke out. When King Rama III heard about the war, he wrote to Lincoln offering to send Thai elephants to fight in the war. This indeed posed a difficult task to the missionary who answered the king's letters.

Let us go back once more to the story about the princess who had fragrant hair. This story also fosters in children loving-kindness or "metta" towards animals. The Thai people believe that we have to live in harmony with other living things. As a small part, we need to live in tune with the whole. Although elephants are animals, we have to work and live with them and show them our kindness and respect.

But what I have mentioned is becoming the culture of the past, and the beautiful culture of Thailand may soon be forgotten by the new generation. Just as the banana leaf that is being forgotten and left behind. Let us stop for a while to look at a banana plant and the Thai life. The banana plant may appear to be a simple plant, but it is of great value. For centuries this plant has held an important place in the Thai life. It is a multi-purpose plant. The banana leaf is used in the kitchen of the poor to make prestigious offerings in the royal ceremonies. It is this green leaf that evokes many kinds of arts that are uniquely Thai. The mid rib of a banana leaf can be made into a horse for children to play with. The soft bark of the tree can be made into string. But one day, there was something new in the Thai life. Someone brought in a new product, a plastic bag! More and more people are beginning to admire the new product. Gradually use of the banana leaf is fading away. It becomes the boring "old" and the plastic bag becomes the exciting "new."

We are also changing to follow the "new" educational system, and we are consequently losing our heritage. The kind of education that arises from the beauty of wholeness is becoming obsolete. The understanding of life that comes out of myth and wonderment is no longer valued. Education is becoming more commercialized and appears

to be competitive, individualistic, scientific, and self-assertive. Actually, the kind of education that we now provide for our children is stiff, like plastic; in other words, it is "non-biodegradable" education. Thus education has become what Tagore (1917b) describes:

> We rob the child of his earth to teach him geography, of language to teach grammar. His hunger is for the Epic, but he is supplied with chronicles of facts and dates. He was born in the human world, but is banished into the world of living gramophones, to expiate for the original sin of being born in ignorance. Child-nature protests against such calamity with all its power of suffering, subdued at last into silence by punishment (p. 116-117).

There are drastic changes in the Thai way of life. Loving-kindness or "metta" is also being forgotten. What is it to practice "metta?"

When we have "metta" we become tactful, and we care about other people's feelings. We love other people as we love our own selves. Listen to this old story from the northeastern part of Thailand:

> A newly married son-in-law was having great difficulty in weaving a winnowing tray. Throughout the morning he made little or no progress but was too shy and chagrined to ask for help from his mother-in-law. His mother-in-law quietly observed his dilemma out of the corner of her eye. Having pity, but wanting to avoid embarrassing him, she solved the problem by chasing away the chickens nibbling on the rice left to dry on the veranda to the cry of "Go away chickens-jump over five go under two. Go away chickens-jump over two go under four" (Kaj mae ka kuam ha yaw song. Kaj ee yong kuam song yaw see). The son-in-law on hearing the formula quickly solved the riddle of how to weave a winnowing tray (Klausner,1987, p. 110).

As we become more materialistic, we also become more selfish and many beautiful ways of life are disappearing as well.

In a tropical country water is very important, thus, in the past, in front of each house there was a stand with a little earth jar filled with cold water so that travellers could quench their thirst. But as we became more "civilized," the earth jar began to disappear. I remember sharing this part of my culture with a German friend, and he told me that in the past the Germans did the same thing, except that instead of leaving the water, they left bread and salt on the veranda for travellers.

But what happens when we blindly accept, the competitive western way of life? From a group-minded mind, unknowingly we change becoming an ugly, a harsh society that is full of aggression and competition. The life of non-possessiveness, sharing, and of giving a helping hand, becomes a life of competition. Thus, each year we now have "the mother of the year," or "the father of the year," or "the village head of the year awards," but all of these arise from competition. Thai culture once emphasized humanity in connectedness, but now the education we give to our children, and the things we do is leading to the dominance of "I." And so the culture of brotherhood is fading away.

I have noticed also that as we become more westernized, we become more business oriented and our spiritual side is neglected. Everything we do and say is geared towards money and profit. Inevitably this ugly idea arises. For example, a group of business men proposed to install a lift at the temple of Doi Sutep to give convenience to, and to gain profit from, the tourists. As in India, many temples in Thailand are built on top of the mountains, or on hills. And this beautiful temple of Doi Sutep is one of them. Why are many temples built on the mountain? Are there any reasons for this? The story is as follow:

> In Thailand there exists a very ancient temple. And the myth goes that in the beginning of Creation, God became angry with some angel. The angel had committed some disobedience, and it was so grave that the God threw him onto the earth and told him that he would have to live as an invisible snake in this ancient temple.
>
> The temple has a tower with one hundred steps, and every pilgrim that comes to the temple has to go to the tower--that is part of the pilgrimage. And God said to this angel, "You will have to live on the first step of the tower, and every pilgrim who comes, you will have to move with him." In Thailand, they divide human consciousness into one hundred steps, and the snake would be able to go with the pilgrim only up to the point where his consciousness existed. If he attained to the twentieth step of consciousness, then the snake would be able to follow up to the twentieth; if to the fiftieth, then the fiftieth. And God said, "If you can reach thrice to the last step, then you will be freed of your sin."
>
> The myth goes that, up to now, only once has the snake been able to reach to the hundredth.
>
> At least ten thousand pilgrims come every day to the ancient temple. Millennia have passed--pilgrims and pilgrims. And the snake has to follow every pilgrim. Sometimes, rarely, it can reach up to the twenty-fifth; very, very rarely up to the fiftieth, and once to the hundredth. It falls back again to the first step. And now even the snake has become very, very depressed--there seems to be no hope. Only once up to now. . . and thrice he has to

> reach to the hundredth, only then will he be freed of the sin (Rajneesh, 1977, pp. 85-86).

Later on, instead of building a tower in the temple ground, the temple itself was built on top of the mountains with snake stairways reminding us that we need to free the snake and at the same time we free ourselves. The temple of Doi Sutep is built on the mountain with a snake stairway. Further to this, climbing to the peak of a mountain is the symbol of hardship that we have to overcome in life. All possessions have to be dropped. Along the way, we can stop and rest to enjoy the beauty of nature. As a result, we gain a better understanding about life from nature. But what about life that is detached from nature? This calls to mind an example. One day on the television I heard this joke:

> In the past natives named their children "Flying Eagle," "Big Buffalo," and so on. But nowadays in the new age, they call their children something like: "Running Motorcycle" or "Little Microwave."

Of course we find this rather humorous, but really what is happening here? In the past, the Indians addressed the buffalo as "thou, an object of reverence" (Campbell, 1988, p. 78). Through the animals, they learn about life and truth. But what are we doing here? Are we doing the opposite? Are we addressing materials such as a motorcycle or a microwave as a "thou" thinking it a worthy object of reverence?

If we go back and reflect upon the "new" Thai way of life, can we call it a civilization? And if it is, what kind of civilization is this? Can we judge civilization by what it chooses to revere? And if so, what is happening now in our culture? Are we on the verge of deteriorating?

I am not against change and improvement. I believe that we need to move with the flow of life. If we are attached to the past only we would become stiff and ugly like a plastic flower. But where, between these two destructive extremes, can we find a place and a way to live ?

Perhaps we need to integrate the old and the new, rather than to blindly accept or reject the new. We need to look at our ancestors and revive their art of "adapting," rather than blindly "adopting" influences. Perhaps their ability to adapt while preserving their

unique identity is the secret of how Thailand became an independent country in South East Asia.

Education could be the way to creating a better life. But it must be the right kind of education. It should reach people in their hearts, and not one that leads to consumerism, and spiritual and intellectual superficiality that is easily roused by new products or the blind acceptance of new ideas. We need to integrate the old and the new (Rajavoramuni 1982), preserving the best of the past, gladly accepting what is good in the new.

"It Is The End Only To The Beginning"

Finally, I have reached the end of this study. To talk about ending is in a way to talk about death, for death is the final end of life. In the East, we feel that death is beautiful. "Death is the crescendo of life, the finishing touch" (Rajneesh, 1978, p. 110). To understand life fully, one needs to understand death, for life and death are like the two forces of Yin and Yang. The movement of life into death is like the merging of day and night. It occurs, perhaps as this beautiful saying by a child suggests, "I know how daytime changes to nighttime. Daytime melts" (Lewis, 1983, p. 217).

If we look at the end of a play or a poem, for example, is it really an end? is it really an absolute death? Tagore (1917 a) states that "The true poem knows when to come to an end. . . by stopping, it does not die, but lives" (p. 108). Then in death it is not really an end but rather a birth, a new beginning.

In the Thai culture, the banana plant seems to be associated with death in various ways. During World War II, many people in Thailand got sick and died in a smallpox epidemic. The whole banana leaf was used as a winding sheet or bed sheets due to the shortage of cloth. Thus, in some villages in Thailand, to bring the whole banana leaf to the house is taboo. Because this signifies the death of a loved one. Therefore the long leaf needs to be cut in half.

If we reflect upon the life cycle of a banana plant, it gives us insights into the meaning of death. Then we learn that death is beautiful. Observing the banana plant, we know that in birth there is death, and in death there is birth. After a banana plant bears fruits, it dies. It is the natural law. It has fulfilled the purpose of its life and so it must die to make room for the new generation. This is why we say death is not really an end, but the beginning of a new life. Krishnamurti (1984) holds that death is a new form of continuity. In death there is an association with a new existence, a new experience, a new breath, and a new life. The old ceases and the new is born and the new then gives place to yet another new. Death is the way to the new state, a new invention, a way of life, or a new thought. Indeed, it is a frightening change, but if we ponder deeply, we see that in that very change, it brings a fresh hope.

If we go back to look at Ian's visual narrative of Lydia And The Plant With The Strange Color, we recall that toward the end of his visual narrative Ian made Lydia die. But actually, Lydia was not dead-- she was born again in the Candyland. Lydia does not die; but she reappears in a new world, with a new life. Death, then, brings new hope for Lydia and La-Di-La. In their new existence, they meet in the Candyland where the clouds would rain and there were small suns. In a sense, they pass from death to deathlessness.

In the life cycle, things come and go. The seasons, too, come and go, but they always return. In a garden, flowers bloom and fade, but they do not really come to an end. They bloom and bloom again. In their ending they do not really cease. There is continuity (Tagore,1917 a).

In other words, death is similar to a rose which blooms and it is gone. It never stays the same. Perhaps its impermanence that makes the rose more beautiful and unforgettable:

> It is like a rose flower. In the morning it was there, by the evening it is gone. And the rose is far more beautiful because it will disappear. If it was going to be there for ever and ever like a plastic flower, there would not have been any beauty. The very possibility of its disappearance makes it immensely valuable (Rajneesh, 1976, p. 119).

In a way there seems to be a sense of rendering in death. The term "rendering" here holds a different meaning from the previous chapter. I have talked about "rendering" in the sense of "to echo," "to reproduce," "to represent by artist," "to depict," and "to give performance of."

Let me give you some examples of a different meaning of the word "render." For example, we talk about rendering fat. To render fat we put it in the oven at high heat. From solid it becomes liquid, although it will go back to solid form again when it is cooled. At times, we render fat and give it to the animals. Or we speak of saving rendered bacon fat and using it again to cook. Thus, in its etymological meanings, "to render" means to melt down, to gradually change to something different, and to convert. And if we look at the meaning of "to convert," we find these meanings: "outlet," "light," "gate," "window," and "passage." Thus, we may connect the meaning of "rendering" with an outlet to something new; it then suggests a light that leads us from the dark; or a window through which we see or perceive a new world. It can imply a gate to the unknown, or a passage to the new.

It is said that when Lao Tsue reached his old age he seriously asked himself about life and death. One day while he was watching the dead leaves falling from a tree, he became enlightened. In the East we say that when one is enlightened, one is "dead" because that person is dead from the concept of duality as good and bad, love and hatred and winning and losing. In other words, one is transformed to a better being. And so I end this section with the words of Lao Tsue, "It is the end only to the beginning."

The last page. . .

There seem to be so many things that we wish to write.

Like the last day of our life.

There are so many things that we wish to do,

But we cannot do any thing.

The last page. . .

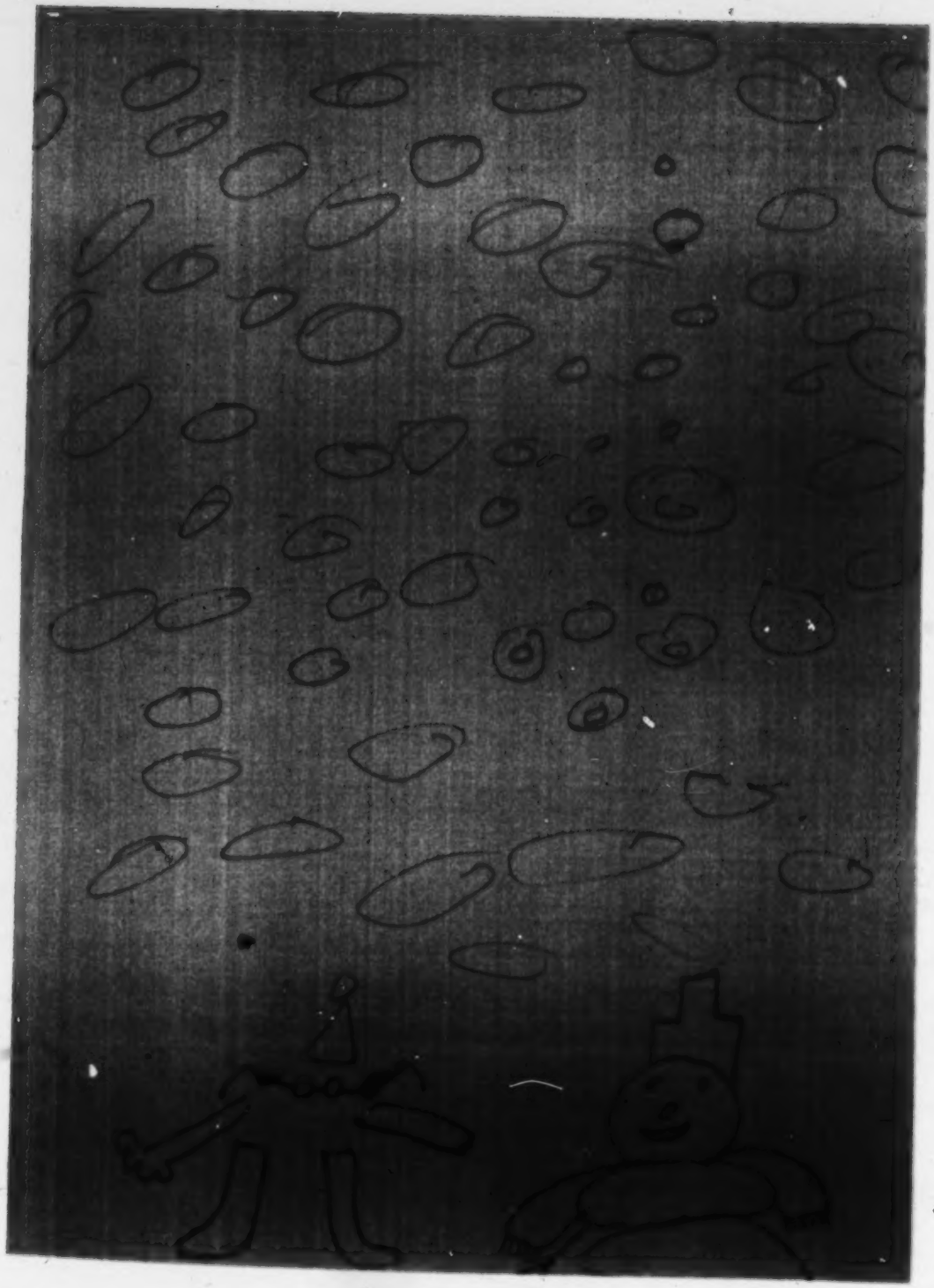
I leave it empty.

So that it will be the first page of a new book,

A new poem,

A new life,

In an imortal river (Jantara-Santi, 1982, p. 152).



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